

A  
**CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY**

OF THE PEOPLE CALLED  
**METHODISTS.** *698.C.18*

CONTAINING

*An Account of their Rise and Progress, from the  
Year 1729, to the Year 1799:*

INCLUDING

THE MINUTES OF THE SEVERAL CONFERENCES,  
*An Account of their Doctrines, and Rules of Discipline, with  
the most remarkable Transactions.*

ALSO,

Short Accounts of some of  
THE MOST EMINENT MEN,  
*Who have laboured among them.*

WITH AN

**A P P E N D I X,**

Containing two Lists of the Itinerant Preachers,  
The one taken in the Year 1765, the other in the Year 1790.

WITH THE

LAST WILL AND TESTAMENT

OF THE

*Rev. John Wesley.*

THE WHOLE INTERSPERSED WITH REFLECTIONS:  
BY WILLIAM MYLES. *K*

ACCORDING TO THIS TIME IT SHALL BE SAID OF  
JACOB AND OF ISRAEL,  
*WHAT HATH GOD WROUGHT!* Numbers xxiii. v. 23.

*I design plain Truth for plain People.*

Preface to Mr. Wesley's Sermons.

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1799.



COLLEGE OF THE HOLY TRINITY

OF THE HOLY TRINITY

MET HODIST

CONGREGATION

AND CHURCH OF THE HOLY TRINITY

OF THE HOLY TRINITY

THE MEMBERS OF THE HOLY TRINITY

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## THE PREFACE.

*THE materials from whence I have chiefly compiled this History, are, The Minutes of the Conferences: for as the Societies were formed by the labours of the Preachers, so they have been preserved as One Body, animated by One Spirit, chiefly, under God, by the Rules which were made annually, at those meetings. The origin, encrease, and establishment of the Societies, must therefore be sought chiefly in these Records.*

*I have in this History inserted all the Minutes.*

1. Those which relate to Doctrines. 2. The Rules according to which the Preachers are called to, and directed in the Work. 3. Those which were made at different times for the regulation and well-ordering of the Societies. And 4, those which concern their connexion with other people: and especially with the National Church. I have noted these things in the order in which they occurred.

*I have also taken notice of the increase of Methodism; and in a few instances mentioned some of those blessed men whom God has used as Instruments in this great Revival of Scriptural Christianity.*

*I have*

*I have consulted Mr. Wesley's Journals,\* his Ecclesiastical History, his Life written by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, that by Dr. Whitehead, and that by the Rev. John Hampson; as also the Memoirs of the Preachers, published in the Arminian Magazine, in order to find out those particulars which took place prior to the first Conference, as also to amplify some particulars which are barely mentioned at those which followed.*

*My reasons for publishing this History are,*  
 1. *I have been acquainted with the People from my infancy, and always loved them. For near seven and twenty years past my chief employment has been to study their Doctrines, and rules of discipline.* 2. *I wished to shew the Methodists what great things the Lord has done for them; how from very small beginnings they became a very numerous, useful, holy people, owing to the Lord's blessing on his Gospel preached among them.* 3. *To shew them at what time these regulations, took place, and those rules were made, which under God have been instrumental in preserving so numerous a body united together.* 4. *To shew, that though our Doctrines have been the same from the first, and, as we think, purely Scriptural, the same which the primitive Christians held for the three first Centuries; and also agreeable to the Liturgy, Articles and Homilies of the established Church; yet with regard to our Discipline and Economy, we have been in a regular*

*\* The Journals are an invaluable work. But they would be more useful, if 1. Short notes were subjoined to them, explaining some particulars which are but just mentioned and need explanation. 2. If the names were written in full where only the initials are given. 3. If at the top of each page the month and year were inserted when the circumstances took place, which are mentioned in the page. For the want of these helps, in many places, they are not so satisfactory as they might be.*

gular state of improvement from the first Conference in 1744, to the last in August 1799.

The first methodist Society, Mr. Wesley tells us he formed himself in London, in the year 1739. From that year to the present, 1799, is exactly sixty years. At the former of these periods there were but ten persons united together. At the last Conference which was held in August 1799, there were one hundred and eighty thousand, seven hundred and fifty-one members in the several Societies. The general account of this people is the subject of this History

May the Lord abundantly bless us, by redeeming us from all iniquity, and making us a peculiar people zealous of good works! May we never forget the end of our calling, but labour night and day that we may be found of God in peace, without Spot and Blameless!

WILLIAM MYLES.

Rochdale, December 1, 1799.



## ERRATA.

Page 89, line 30, for *is* read *as*.

Page 126, line 21, for 1795, read 1785.

Page 171, line 31, for *Works*, read *Work*.

Page 185, line 24, dele *this*.

Page 195, line 16, for 940, read 840.

Page 189, line 8, for *shall*, read *shalt*.

Page 199, line 9, for 44,830, read 43,830.

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## CHRONOLOGICAL HISTORY, &c

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### CHAPTER THE FIRST.

*From the year 1729, to the first Conference in 1744.*

**T**HE Rev. John Wesley, (the father, under God, of the Methodists,) second son of the Rev. Samuel Wesley, Rector of Epworth in Lincolnshire, was born June 17, old style, 1703.

In the year 1720, He entered a student in Christ's Church College, Oxford, and soon after took his degree of Bachelor of Arts.

Sept. 19, 1725, He was ordained a Deacon, by Dr. Potter, at that time Bishop of Oxford.

March 17, 1726, He was elected Fellow of Lincoln College, Oxford.

Feb. 14, 1727, He took his degree of Master of Arts.

Sept. 22, 1728, He was by the same Bishop ordained Priest.

Of the Name of Methodist as applied to Mr. Wesley and his followers, the following account is

B

given.

given. Mr. John Wesley, and by his advice and example, his brother Charles, had when at Oxford, become deeply serious. They received the sacrament weekly, and prevailed on two or three young men to do the same. These gentlemen occasionally met together, for the purpose of assisting and encouraging each other, in their studies and religious duties; they also regulated their employments by certain rules. This regularity procured them the distinguishing epithet of *Methodists*. This is probably the most accurate account; for when Mr. Wesley speaks of this appellation, he mentions it only in very general terms, without attempting to state at what period of the Society it was first given. "The exact regularity of their lives, as well as studies, says he, occasioned a young gentleman of Christ's Church to say. 'There is a new set of Methodists sprung up,' alluding to some antient physicians who were so called," who began to flourish at Rome about the time of Nero, and continued several ages. "The name, he observes, was new and quaint, so it took immediately, and the Methodists were known all over the university." One thing is certain, the name was first given at Oxford.

Thus the society began and continued, till Mr. John Wesley went to Epworth to assist his father as his curate. In his absence, June 16, 1729, Mr. Charles Wesley, and one or two more again began to meet to assist each other. In Nov. 1729, when Mr. John Wesley returned from Epworth, the whole management of the society devolved upon him, as he had before incited them to religion. It consisted of the following Persons, Mr. John Wesley, Mr. Charles Wesley, Mr. Morgan, and Mr. Kirkman. In 1732, Mr. Ingham and Mr. Broughton joined them. In April,  
in



in the same year, Mr. Clayton with two or three of his pupils were added, and about the same time Mr. James Hervey, pupil to Mr. John Wesley: shortly after Mr. George Whitfield. These were all Collegians and must be considered as the first *Methodists*. They formed rules for the regulation of their *time*, their *studies*, *reading the scriptures*, and *self-examination*. They also visited the *sick*, and the *prisoners*; and received the Lord's-supper *every week*. Our Lord's parables of the leaven hid in three measures of meal, and of the grain of mustard-seed, *Matt. xiii. 31--34.* are herein strikingly illustrated, for, from these very small beginnings, what a great increase has been given!

Mr. Wesley gives the following account of the rise of Methodism. "In 1729, my brother and I reading the Bible, saw inward and outward holiness therein: followed after it, and incited others so to do. In 1737, we saw this holiness comes by faith, and that men are justified before they are sanctified. But still holiness was our point, *inward and outward holiness.*"

In the beginning of the year 1735, he for the first time preached extempore, in All-hallow's-Church, Lombard-street, London. He went with a view of hearing Dr. Heylin, but he not coming, the Church-Wardens requested Mr. Wesley to preach. He complied though he had no notes. This is now universally practised by all the Methodist Preachers, and also by many Ministers of the Established Church, especially those who are considered as *Gospel Ministers*: but at that time, and for several years after, it was looked upon as a very uncommon and wonderful thing in these kingdoms.

Oct. 14, 1735, Mr. Wesley set out as a Missionary

onary, for Georgia in America. On his passage, and in America, he became acquainted with the Moravians, by whose instrumentality he saw the way of the Lord more perfectly, viz. "That Holiness comes by Faith."

In April 1736, At his own house in Savannah, he met between twenty or thirty persons, whom he instructed personally and weekly in the things belonging to their peace. This he used to consider, as the *second* rise of Methodism.

In the beginning of August 1737, he joined with the Germans in one of their Love-feasts. This I believe was the first time he ever saw a Love-feast. He speaks thus of it. "It was begun and ended with thanksgiving and prayer, and celebrated in so decent and solemn a manner, as a christian of the Apostolic age would have allowed to be worthy of Christ." He afterwards introduced Love-feasts into the æconomy of Methodism. At first they were for the *Bands* only, *i. e.* small companies of true believers. Afterwards the whole society were permitted to partake with them. They are conducted in the following manner. The meeting begins with singing and prayer, after which the Stewards distribute cake and water. A collection is then made for the poor; afterwards liberty is given to all present to relate their religious experience, which is generally made a blessing to all. The meeting continues nearly two hours, and is concluded with prayer.

Feb. 1, 1738, Mr. Wesley returned to England. On March 27, following, he visited the Castle, *i. e.* the Prison at Oxford, and prayed extempore with a man condemned to die. After prayer the man rose up and said, "I am now ready to die." Before this time Mr. Wesley had always used a *form* of prayer.

May

May 1, 1738, He, and some Moravian brethren, formed themselves into a religious society which met at Fetter-lane, in London. This he calls in his Ecclesiastical History, vol. iv. page 175, the *third* period of Methodism.

June 13, 1738, He set out for Hernhuth in Germany, in order to visit the Moravian brethren in that place, and returned September 16, in the same year. During this journey he conversed freely with them. Some parts of their doctrine and discipline he approved, as Justification by faith; and the putting the people into bands, according to their different degrees of attainment in the divine life. Other parts he disapproved, which after some time, he signified to Count Zinzendorf, in a long letter, which may be seen in vol. i. of his Journals.

In this year, he, for the first time, received assistance in the ministerial office, from a Lay-Preacher. An account of him as published by Mr. Wesley is curious.—“Joseph Humphrys, the first Lay-Preacher that assisted me in England in 1738. He was perfected in love, and so continued for at least twelve months. Afterwards he turned Calvinist, joined Mr. Whitfield, and published an invective against me and my brother in the news-paper. In a while he renounced Mr. Whitfield, and was ordained a Presbyterian minister. At last he received Episcopal ordination. He then scoffed at inward religion, and when reminded of his own experience, replied, “That was one of the foolish things I wrote in the time of my madness.”

Dec. 25, 1738, While he was connected with the society at Fetter-lane, the rules of the Band societies were drawn up, with the following title. “Orders of a religious society, met together,



ther, in obedience to that command of God by St. James, chap. v. 16. *Confess your faults one to another, and pray one for another that ye may be healed.*" By the *Bands* were meant little companies, not less than five, nor more than ten, who met together for the above purpose: married men by themselves, married women by themselves; single men by themselves, and single women by themselves. When he withdrew from the Moravian society, he kept up the distinction of *bands* in his societies. The following are the rules.

" Questions to be proposed to those who desire to be admitted into the Bands.

" 1. Do you enjoy the knowledge of Salvation by the remission of sins? And have you the peace of God in your conscience? 2. Have you the love of God shed abroad in your heart? 3. Have you the spirit of God bearing witness with your spirit, that you are a child of God? 4. Has no sin, inward or outward, dominion over you? 5. Do you desire to be told of all your faults, and that plainly? 6. Do you desire that each of us should tell you whatever we think, or fear, or hear, concerning you? 7. Do you desire, that in doing this, we should come as close as possible; that we should search your heart to the bottom? 8. Do you desire, that each of us should tell you from time to time, whatsoever is in his mind concerning you? 9. Is it your desire and design, to be on this and all other occasions, entirely open, so as to speak every thing that is in your heart, without exception, without disguise, and without reserve?

" Our design is.

" 1. To meet once a week at the least. 2. To come punctually at the hour appointed, without some extraordinary reason. 3. To begin exactly  
at

at the hour, with singing or prayer. 4. To speak each of us in order, freely and plainly, the true state of our souls, with the faults we have committed in thought, word, or deed, and the temptations we have been exercised with since our last meeting. 5. To end each meeting with prayer, suited to the state of each present. 6. To desire some person among us to speak his own experience first; and then to ask the rest in order, as many and as searching questions as may be, concerning their state, sins, and temptations. Such as, 1. Have you been guilty of any known sin since our last meeting? 2. What temptations have you met with? 3. How were you delivered? 4. What have you thought said or done, of which you doubt whether it be a sin or not?"

April 2, 1739, Mr. Wesley being denied the use of the churches in Bristol, preached for the first time, in the open air, on an eminence in the suburbs of that city.

In the same year, he was denied the use of the Churches in London also, because he preached salvation (that is, pardon and holiness,) by *faith*, although thousands crowded to hear him. So he stood up in Moorfields, and other public places, to preach the gospel to the poor. This may be considered as the beginning of his *Itinerancy*.

The first Methodist Preaching-House, was built this year in Bristol. Concerning it, Mr. Wesley says, "On Saturday the 12th of May, 1739, the first stone was laid with the voice of praise and thanksgiving." He settled it on eleven Feoffees, but being convinced by a letter from Mr. Whitfield that, as these men had the power of appointing the preachers, they could turn even him out, if what he said or did should not be pleasing to them; he immediately called them all together,

ther, cancelled the writings, and took the whole management respecting the building into his own hands; believing as he said, "that the earth was the Lord's, and the fulness thereof," and in his name he set out nothing doubting. After some time, and mature deliberation, he got the form of a Trust-deed drawn up by three eminent Counsel, for the settlement of all the Preaching-Houses; which, with some little additions, continues still to be universally used among us.

We see that from the beginning he thought the only possible way for the work of God to continue as it had begun, was by his having the appointment of the Preachers in all the Chapels under his care.

Oct. 15, 1739, Upon a pressing invitation he set out for Wales. The churches there also were shut against him, so he preached to a willing people in private houses, and in the open air. This was the beginning of Methodism in Wales. It has not increased in this country, as it has done in some parts of England, notwithstanding many of the Welch love the Gospel.

If the first Preaching-House was *built* in Bristol, the first which was *opened* was in London. On Sunday, Nov. 11, 1739, he preached in a house in Moorfields, which was called the *Foundry*, it having been formerly the King's Foundry for Cannon.

In this year, the first Hymn Book was published, under the following title, "Hymns and Sacred Poems, by Messrs. John and Charles Wesley." The second was in the year 1742. Since that time there have been Hymns published for all the Festivals—Fasts—Watch-nights—and Intercessions. Also for Families—The Sacrament—Preparation



Preparation for Death—and for Funerals. For Children—and Public Worship.

In the year 1780. Mr. Wesley compiled a large Hymn Book out of all these which is now universally used. It is a complete and regular body of divinity; and, *as he published it*, the Poetry is exquisitely beautiful.

The rise of the Societies is thus related by Mr. Wesley. “In the latter end of the year 1739, eight or ten persons came to me in London, who appeared to be deeply convinced of sin, and earnestly groaning for redemption. They desired as did two or three more the next day, that I would spend some time with them in prayer, and advise them how to flee from the wrath to come, which they saw continually hanging over their heads. That they might have more time for this great work, I appointed a day when they might all come together, which from thenceforward they did every week, viz. on Thursday in the evening. To these, and as many more as desired to join with them, (for their number increased daily) I gave that advice which I judged most useful for them, and we always concluded the meeting with prayer suited to their several necessities.” This was the rise of the Methodist society, first in London, then in other places. Such a society is no other than, “A company of persons, having the form and seeking the power of godliness: united in order to pray together, to receive the word of exhortation, and to watch over one another in love, that they may help each other to work out their Salvation.” It appears from this account that he did not consider this as a division from the established church, but simply as a religious society. It was not till May 1, 1743, that he and his Brother Charles, drew up Rules for the  
the

the united Societies. This period must be considered as the *fourth* in Methodism. The first at Oxford in 1729. The second in America in 1736. The third in London in 1738. And now this in 1739. The Society then formed was properly the first, or Mother Society.

The exact month does not appear when the first Lay-Preachers assisted Mr. Wesley, as Itinerants. His account is in the large minutes, after mentioning the time when he formed the first society, viz. the latter end of the year 1739. "After a time a young man named *Thomas Maxfield*, came and desired to help me as a son in the Gospel. Soon after came a second, *Thomas Richards*, then a third, *Thomas Westall*. These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labour when and where I should direct." It is probable this was in the beginning of the year 1740.

Since that time there have been some hundreds, nay thousands, if we include Local Preachers, who have been employed in this great work. "The Lord gave the word, and great was the company of the Preachers," *Psa. lxxviii. 11.*

In July 23, 1740. He finally separated from the Moravians, and met his own little society at the Foundry. He had not the whole management of that Moravian Society which met in Fetter-lane, and can only be considered in the light of an active member. Peter Boehler, and a Mr. Molther, who occasioned the dispute on account of which he separated from them, were the ruling members. They differed about the nature of faith, and the way to attain it. Mr. *Molther* taught, 1. That there were no *degrees* in faith. 2. That the way to attain it was to be *still*, that is not to attend the ordinances of God. Whereas Mr. Wesley asserted that

that there were degrees in faith, and that the way to attain it was, by constantly attending on all the ordinances of God. The 8th of August, in this year, he addressed his open and candid letter to the Moravian Church. It is in the first Vol. of his Journals, and is well worthy of perusal.

This was the first separation that took place in the Methodist society, or rather, it was the separation of the Methodists from the Moravians. He speaks of it thus,—“About twenty-five of our brethren God hath given us already, all of whom think and speak the same thing; seven or eight and forty likewise of the fifty women that were in Band, desire to cast in their lot with us.”

In the latter end of the year 1740, on account of a dispute which had then arisen, Mr. Wesley printed a sermon against the Calvinistic notion of Predestination, and sent a copy of it to Commissary *Gordon* at Charlestown, where Mr. Whitfield then was. Mr. Whitfield having a little before embraced that doctrine, wrote a reply and published it in America. When he came to England in 1741, he re-published this reply in London; at the same time he wrote a letter to Mr. Charles Wesley on the subject of the controversy.\* The points in dispute were 1. Unconditional election. 2. Irresistible grace. 3. Final perseverance. As the parties remained firm in their several opinions, a separation took place between them, so far as to have different places of worship and to form different societies; and some warm expressions dropt from them towards each other. This was the second division in the society, and gave rise to two societies of Methodists, the one called

\* Mr. Charles Wesley had published some Hymns on Universal Redemption.



called Calvinists, the other Arminians: and they still differ upon the points on which their leaders differed at the first. Mr. Wesley greatly regretted this separation from Mr. Whitfield, and strove to prevent it; but though he did not succeed, their mutual affection returned. They agreed to differ, and frequently preached in each others chapels.

In 1742, the societies having greatly increased, were divided into *Classes*, each class consisting of twelve persons or more, who were committed to the care of one person stiled the Leader. Mr. Wesley thus records the occasion of this.—

Feb. 15, 1742, He observes, “many were met together at Bristol to consult concerning a proper method of paying the public debt contracted by building, and it was agreed. 1. That every member of the society that was able should contribute one penny a week. 2. That the whole society should be divided into little ccompanies or classes, about twelve in each class. 3. That one person in each should receive the contribution of the rest, and bring it in to the stewards weekly. Thus began says he, that excellent institution, merely upon a temporal account, from which we reaped so many spiritual blessings, that we soon fixed the same rule in all our societies.”

April 9, 1742, The first watch-night was held in London. The service at these times begins at half past eight o'clock, and continues till midnight. The custom was begun at Kingswood by the colliers there, who, before their conversion, used to spend every Saturday night at the ale-house. After they were taught better, they spent that night in prayer. Mr. Wesley hearing of it, ordered it first to be once a month, at the full of the moon, then once a quarter, and recommended it to all his societies.

In

In this year commenced also in London, the visitation of the Classes, once a quarter, by the Preachers, which gives them an opportunity of conversing four times every year with the people, concerning the state of their souls; as also of ascertaining who continue to be real members, by giving to each Person a Ticket, with a text of Scripture on it, as a mark of their approbation. This is now universally practised, and the Ticket is the same in every place. The increase of the Societies, together with the probable supposition, that improper persons would endeavour to come among them, led to this prudential measure.

May 26, 1742, Mr. Wesley visited Birstall, in the West-riding of the County of York, where he met with a Lay-Preacher, Mr. John Nelson, who was instrumental in turning many of his neighbours from darkness to light. After some time Mr. Nelson, who heartily joined Mr. Wesley in his Work, published a journal of his travels and Christian experience, which has been rendered a blessing to thousands; and is still in circulation among the Methodists. From that time Methodism has taken a deep root in the County of York.

In the year 1743, May 1, The rules of the Society were first published under the following title, "The Nature, Design, and General Rules of the United Societies in London, Bristol, and Newcastle-upon-Tyne, &c." After reciting the rise of the Societies, as related in the 9, and 12 pages, he thus proceeds.

"It is the business of a Leader,

"1. To see each person in his Class once a week at the least: in order to enquire how their souls prosper. To advise, reprove, comfort, or exhort, as occasion may require; to receive what they are willing to give for the support of the Gospel.

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"2. To

“ 2. To meet the Minister and the Stewards of the Society; in order to inform the Minister of any that are sick, or of any that are disorderly and will not be reprov'd; to pay the Stewards what they have received of their several Classes in the week preceding.

“ There is one only condition previously required of those who desire admission into these Societies, *a desire to flee from the wrath to come; to be saved from their sins*: but, wherever this is really fixed in the soul, it will be shewn by its fruits. It is therefore expected of all who continue therein, that they should continue to evidence their desire of salvation,

“ First, By doing no harm, by avoiding evil in every kind; especially that which is most generally practised. Such as, The taking the name of God in vain. The profaning the day of the Lord, either by doing ordinary work thereon, or buying and selling. Drunkenness, buying or selling spirituous liquors: or drinking them unless in cases of extreme necessity. Fighting, quarrelling, brawling; brother going to law with brother; returning evil for evil, or railing for railing: the using many words in buying or selling. The buying or selling uncustomed goods. The giving or taking things on usury: *i. e.* unlawful interest. Uncharitable or unprofitable conversation; particularly, speaking evil of Magistrates, or of Ministers. Doing to others as we would not they should do unto us. Doing what we know is not for the Glory of God: as, the putting on of Gold or costly apparel. The taking such diversions as cannot be used in the name of the Lord Jesus. The singing those songs, or reading those books, which do not tend to the knowledge or love of God. Softness and needless self-indulgence. Laying  
up



up treasure upon earth. Borrowing without a probability of paying: or taking up goods without a probability of paying for them.

“ It is expected of all who continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of Salvation,

“ Secondly, By doing good, by being in every kind merciful after their power, as they have opportunity doing good of every possible sort, and as far as is possible to all men. To their bodies, of the ability which God giveth, by giving food to the hungry, by cloathing the naked, by visiting or helping them that are sick or in prison. To their souls, by instructing, reproving, or exhorting all we have any intercourse with: trampling under foot that enthusiastic doctrine of devils, that we are not to do good, unless our hearts be free to it. By doing good especially to them that are of the household of faith, or groaning so to be: employing them preferably to others, buying one of another, helping each other in business: and so much the more, because the world will love its own, and them only.

“ By all possible diligence and frugality, that the Gospel be not blamed. By running with patience the race that is set before them, denying themselves and taking up their cross daily; submitting to bear the reproach of Christ; to be as the filth and offscouring of the world: and looking that men should say all manner of evil of them falsely for the Lord's sake.

“ It is expected of all who desire to continue in these Societies, that they should continue to evidence their desire of Salvation,

“ Thirdly, By attending on all the ordinances of God: such are, The public worship of God: The ministry of the word, either read or ex-

pounded. The supper of the Lord; family and private prayer; searching the scriptures: and fasting or abstinence.

“ These are the general rules of our Societies: all which we are taught of God to observe, even in his written word, the only rule, and the sufficient rule both of our faith and practice. And all these we know his Spirit writes on every truly awakened heart. If there be any among us who observe them not, who habitually break any of them, let it be made known unto them who watch over that soul, as they that must give an account. We will admonish him of the error of his ways; we will bear with him for a season. But then if he repent not, he hath no more place among us. We have delivered our own souls.

JOHN WESLEY.

CHARLES WESLEY.”

These rules went through two and twenty editions before Mr. Wesley died, and are still greatly approved by the people.

Aug. 26, 1743, Mr. Wesley set out for Cornwall. His brother and two of the Preachers had been there some time before. In this country Methodism has had a great increase, and it still flourishes. The Cornish people received the word with all readiness of mind, and with joy in the Holy Ghost.

## CHAPTER THE SECOND.

*From the first Conference in 1744, to the Conference held in Bristol in the year 1748.*

JUNE 25, 1744, The first Conference was held in London. Mr. Wesley invited the persons who attended, and also presided among them. There were six clergymen and all the travelling preachers present. The names of the clergymen were, John Wesley, Charles Wesley, John Hodges, Rector of Wenbo, Henry Piers, Vicar of Bexley, Samuel Taylor, Vicar of Quinton, and John Meriton. The names of the preachers were not published. From this time the Conference met every year under Mr. Wesley's direction, at London, Bristol, or Leeds, but he did not till the year 1765, annually publish the *minutes*.

He gave the name of Conference not to what was said, but to the persons assembled. The advantages of this meeting are obvious, 1. It brings the Preachers into a closer union with each other. 2. It makes them more deeply sensible of the necessity of acting in concert and harmony together. 3. It is a means of quickening their zeal. 4. It terminates any dispute that may arise in the body during the year, as the Preachers agree to submit to its decisions; And, 5. by changing the Preachers from one circuit to another, it proves a blessing to the people, giving them the benefit of the gifts and abilities of the Preachers in general, while it gratifies an innocent curiosity. The subjects of their deliberations were proposed in



the form of questions, which were amply discussed, and, with the answers, written down, and afterwards printed under the the title of, "Minutes of several conversations between the Reverend Mr. Wesley and others:" but now commonly called, *The Minutes of the Conference.*

The following is Mr. Wesley's Introduction to the first Conference. "It is desired that all things be considered as in the immediate presence of God. That we meet with a single eye, and as little children, who have every thing to learn. That every point which is proposed, may be examined to the foundation. That every person may speak freely whatever is in his heart. And that every question which may arise, should be thoroughly debated and settled.

2. Need we be fearful of doing this? What are we afraid of? Of overturning our first principles?—*A.* If they are false, the sooner they are overturned the better. If they are true, they will bear the strictest examination. Let us all pray for a willingness to receive light, to know of every doctrine, whether it be of God.

2. How may the time of this Conference be made more eminently a time of watching unto prayer?—*A.* 1. While we are conversing let us have an especial care to set God always before us. 2. In the intermediate hours, let us visit none but the sick, and spend all the time that remains in retirement. 3. Let us therein give ourselves to prayer for one another, and for a blessing upon this our labour.

2. How far does each of us agree to submit to the judgment of the majority.—*A.* In speculative things, each can only submit so far as his judgment shall be convinced. In every practical point, each will submit so far as he can without wounding his conscience.

2. Can

2. Can a Christian submit any farther than this, to any man, or number of men upon earth? —*A.* It is undeniably certain he cannot; either to *Bishop, Convocation, or General Council.* And this is that grand principle of private judgment on which all the reformers proceeded, “Every man must judge for himself; because every man must give an account of himself to God.” It is impossible to read this without admiring it; let it never be forgotten that these principles formed the basis of the Methodist Conference.

After the design of the meeting had been thus proposed; they began to consider, 1. What to teach? 2. How to teach? 3. What to do, That is, how to regulate their doctrine, discipline, and practice? The first question refers to doctrines, the second to discipline, the third to their whole æconomy, including their Itinerancy and the government of the Societies.

Three points were fully considered at this time, 1. The Doctrine of Justification. 2. That of Sanctification. 3. Their Connexion with the established church.

#### 1. JUSTIFICATION.

2. What is it to be justified?—*A.* To be pardoned, and received into God’s favour, into such a state that if we continue therein, we shall be finally saved.

2. Is faith the condition of Justification?—*A.* Yes; for every one who believeth not is condemned; and every one who believes is justified.

2. But must not Repentance, and works meet for repentance, go before this Faith?—*A.* Without doubt. If by repentance you mean conviction  
of

of sin; and by works meet for repentance, obeying God as far as we can, forgiving our brother, leaving off from evil, doing good and using the ordinances according to the power we have received.

2. What is faith?—*A.* Faith in general is, a divine, supernatural *Elenchos* (Demonstration) of things not seen; *i. e.* of Past, Future, or Spiritual things: It is a spiritual sight of God and the things of God. First, a sinner is convinced by the Holy Ghost, "Christ loved me and gave himself for me."—This is the faith by which he is justified or pardoned, the moment he receives it. Immediately the same spirit bears witness, "Thou art pardoned. Thou hast redemption in his blood."—And this is saving faith, whereby the love of God is shed abroad in his heart.

2. Have all Christians this faith? May not a man be justified and not know it?—*A.* That all true Christians have such a faith as implies an assurance of God's love, appears from *Rom.* viii. 15. *Eph.* iv. 32. *2 Cor.* xiii. 5. *Heb.* viii. 10. *1 John* iv. 10.—v. 19. And that no man can be justified and not know it, appears farther from the nature of the thing. For faith after repentance is ease after pain: Rest after toil: Light after darkness. It appears also from the *immediate*, as well as *distant* fruits thereof.

2. But may not a man go to heaven without it?—*A.* It does not appear from Holy Writ that a man who hears the Gospel can: (*Mark* xvi. 16.) whatever a heathen man may do, *Rom.* ii. 14.

2. What are the immediate fruits of justifying faith?—*A.* Peace, Joy, Love, Power over all outward sin, and power to keep down inward sin.

2. Does any one believe, who has not the witness in himself, or any longer than he sees,  
loves,



loves, and obeys God?—*A.* We apprehend not; *seeing* God being the very essence of faith: love and obedience the inseparable properties of it.

2. What sins are consistent with justifying faith?—*A.* No wilful sin. If a believer wilfully sins, he casts away his faith. Neither is it possible he should have *justifying faith* again, without previously *repenting*.

2. *Must* every believer, come into a state of darkness, doubt or fear? Will he do so, unless by ignorance or unfaithfulness? Does God otherwise withdraw himself?—*A.* It is certain a believer, *need* never again come into condemnation. It seems, he need not come into a state of darkness, doubt or fear: And that ordinarily at least he will not, unless by ignorance or unfaithfulness. Yet it is true, that the first joy does seldom last long: that it is commonly followed by doubts and fears; and that God frequently permits great heaviness, before any large manifestation of himself.

2. Are works necessary to the continuance of faith?—*A.* Without doubt; for a man may forfeit the free gift of God either by sins of omission, or commission.

2. Can faith be lost, but for want of works?—*A.* It cannot but through disobedience.

2. How is faith *made perfect by works*?—*A.* The more we exert our faith, the more it is increased. *To him that hath shall be given.*

2. St. Paul says, *Abraham* was not *justified by works*. St. James says, He was *justified by works*. Do they not contradict each other?—*A.* No. 1. Because they do not speak of the same justification. St. Paul speaks of that justification which was when Abraham was seventy-five years old, above twenty-five years before Isaac was born.

born. St. James of that justification which was when he offered up Isaac on the altar. 2. Because they do not speak of the same works. St. Paul speaking of works that precede faith: St. James of works that spring from it.

2. In what sense is *Adam's* sin imputed to all mankind?—*A.* In Adam all die, *i. e.* 1. Our bodies then became mortal. 2. Our souls died, *i. e.* were disunited from God. And hence 3. We are all born with a sinful devilish nature: By reason whereof, 4. We are children of wrath, liable to death eternal. *Rom. v. 18. Eph. ii. 3.*

2. In what sense is the Righteousness of Christ imputed to all mankind, or to Believers?—*A.* We do not find it expressly affirmed in Scripture, that God imputes the righteousness of Christ to any. Although we do find, that *faith* is imputed to us for righteousness. That text, “As by one Man’s disobedience all men were made sinners, so by the obedience of one, all were made righteous,” we conceive means, by the merits of Christ, all men are cleared from the guilt of Adam’s actual sin. We conceive farther, that through the obedience and death of Christ, 1. The bodies of all men become immortal after the resurrection. 2. Their souls receive a capacity of spiritual life. 3. An actual spark or seed thereof. 4. All believers become children of grace, reconciled to God, and made partakers of the Divine nature.

2. Have we not then unawares leaned too much towards *Calvinism*?—*A.* We are afraid we have.

2. Have we not also leaned towards Antinomianism?—*A.* We are afraid we have.

2. What is Antinomianism?—*A.* The doctrine which makes void the law through faith.

2. What

2. What are the main pillars thereof?—

*A.* 1. That Christ abolished the moral law. 2. That therefore Christians are not obliged to observe it. 3. That one branch of Christian liberty, is liberty from obeying the commandments of God. 4. That it is bondage to do a thing, because it is commanded, or forbear it because it is forbidden. 5. That a believer is not *obliged* to use the ordinances of God or to do good works. 6. That a Preacher ought not to exhort to good works: Not unbelievers, because it is hurtful; not believers, because it is needless.

2. What was the occasion of St. Paul's writing his epistle to the *Galatians*?—*A.* The coming of certain men amongst the *Galatians*, who taught, *Except ye be circumcised and keep the law of Moses ye cannot be saved.*

2. What is his main design therein?—*A.* To prove, 1. That no man can be justified or saved by the works of the Law, either Moral or Ritual. 2. That every believer is justified by faith in Christ without the works of the law.

2. What does he mean by the works of the law? *Gal. ii. 16.*—*A.* All works which do not spring from faith in Christ.

2. What by being under the law? *Gal. iii. 23.*—*A.* Under the *Mosaic* dispensation.

2. What law has Christ abolished?—*A.* The Ritual law of Moses.

2. What is meant by liberty? *Gal. v. 1.*—*A.* Liberty, 1. From that law. 2. From sin.

THE SECOND POINT WHICH WAS CONSIDERED WAS  
THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION.

2. What is it to be sanctified?—*A.* To be renewed in the image of God in righteousness and true holiness.

2. Is



2. Is faith the condition ; or the instrument of sanctification ?—*A.* It is both the condition and the instrument of it. When we begin to believe, then sanctification begins. And as faith increases, holiness increases, till we are created anew.

2. What is implied in being a *perfect Christian* ?—*A.* The loving the Lord our God with all our heart, and with all our mind, and soul and strength. *Deut.* vi. 5.—xxx. 6. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25.—29.

2. Does this imply, that all inward sin is taken away ?—*A.* Without doubt : or how could he be said to be saved *from all his uncleannesses.* v. 29.

2. Can we know one who is thus saved ? What is a reasonable proof of it ?—*A.* We cannot without the miraculous discernment of spirits, be infallibly certain of those who are thus saved. But we apprehend, these would be the best proofs which the nature of the thing admits. 1. If we had sufficient evidence of their unblameable behaviour, at least from the time of their justification. 2. If they gave a distinct account of the time and manner wherein they were saved from sin, and of the circumstances thereof, with such sound speech as could not be reprov'd. And, 3. If upon a strict enquiry from time to time, for two or three years following, it appeared that all their tempers, words, and actions, were holy and unrepveable.

2. How should we treat those who think they have attained this ?—*A.* Exhort them to forget the things that are behind, and to watch and pray always, that God may search the ground of their hearts.

## THE THIRD POINT RESPECTED THE ESTABLISHED CHURCH.

2. What is the Church of England?—*A.* According to the twentieth article, the visible Church of England is, the Congregation of English Believers, in which the pure word of God is preached, and the Sacraments duly administered. (But the word Church is sometimes taken in a looser sense, for a congregation *professing* to believe, so it is taken in the twenty-sixth article, and in the first, second, and third chapters of the Revelation.)

2. What is a Member of the Church of England?—*A.* A Believer hearing the pure word of God preached, and partaking of the Sacraments duly administered in that Church.

2. What is it to be zealous for the Church?—*A.* To be earnestly desirous of its welfare and increase: of its welfare, by the confirmation of its present members, in faith, hearing, and communicating: and of its increase by the addition of new members.

2. How are we to defend the doctrine of the Church?—*A.* Both by our preaching and living.

2. How should we behave at a false or railing sermon?—*A.* If it only contain personal reflections, we may quietly suffer it. If it blaspheme the Word and Spirit of God, it may be better to go out of the church. In either case, if opportunity serve, it would be well to write to the Minister.

2. How far is it our duty to obey the Bishops?—*A.* In all things indifferent: and on this ground of obeying them, we should observe the *canons*, so far as we can with a safe conscience.

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2. Do we separate from the church?—*A.* We conceive not: we hold communion therewith, for conscience sake, by constantly attending both the word preached, and the sacraments administered therein.

2. What then do they mean who say, “you separate from the Church.”—*A.* We cannot certainly tell. Perhaps they have no determinate meaning, unless by the Church they mean themselves, *i. e.* that part of the clergy who accuse us of preaching false doctrine. And it is sure we do herein separate from *them*, by maintaining that which they deny.

2. But do you not weaken the Church?—*A.* Do not they who ask this, by the Church mean *themselves*?—*A.* We do not purposely weaken any man’s hands, but accidentally we may thus far: they who come to know the truth by us, will esteem such as deny it, less than they did before. But the Church in the proper sense, the congregation of English *Believers*, we do not weaken at all.

2. Do you not entail a schism on the church?  
*i. e.* Is it not probable, that your hearers after your death, will be scattered into all sects and parties? Or, that they will form themselves into a distinct sect?—*A.* 1. We are persuaded that the body of our hearers will even after our death remain in the church, unless they be thrust out. 2. We believe notwithstanding, either that they will be thrust out, or that they will leaven the whole church. 3. We do, and will do, all we can, to prevent those consequences which are supposed likely to happen after our death. 4. But we cannot with a good conscience neglect the present opportunity of saving souls while we live,  
for



for fear of consequences which may possibly or probably happen after we are dead.

From these minutes we learn the following particulars. 1. That Mr. Wesley considered the Methodist Societies to be a part of the Church of England, (as fully answering the above definition, Question the second, page 25) though also embracing *all those who fear God and work righteousness, and are willing to conform to the rules.* 2. That by keeping to the church at large, he meant, attending the service and sacrament.

Dec. 25, 1744, Mr. Wesley drew up the following directions for the Band Societies, and recommended them with the Band rules.

“You are supposed to have the “faith that overcometh the world,” to you therefore it is not grievous. I. Carefully to abstain from doing evil: in particular, 1. Neither to buy nor sell on the Lord’s-day. 2. To taste no spirituous liquors, unless prescribed by a physician. 3. To be at a word both in buying and selling. 4. Not to mention the fault of any one behind his back, and to stop those short that do. 5. To wear no needless ornaments, such as rings, ear-rings, necklaces, laces, or ruffles. 6. To use no needless self-indulgence, such as taking snuff or tobacco, unless prescribed by a physician.

“II. Zealously to maintain good works: in particular, 1. To give alms of such things as you possess, according to your power. 2. To reprove all that sin in your sight, and that in love, and meekness of wisdom. 3. To be patterns of diligence and frugality, of self-denial, and taking up the cross daily.

“III. Constantly to attend on all the ordinances of God: in particular, 1. To be at public worship, and at the Lord’s table every week, if possible;

and at every public meeting of the Bands. 2. To use private prayer every day: and family prayer, if you are the Head of a family. 3. To read the scriptures, and meditate therein, at every vacant hour, and, 4. To use fasting or abstinence; as often as your health will permit."

In the year 1745, the Rev. William Grimshaw, Vicar of the Parish of Haworth, in Yorkshire, became closely united with the Methodists. He was a most indefatigable man in his labours, and so continued, till on the 7th of April 1763, his happy spirit went to rest, in the fifty-fifth year of his age. His last words were, "Here goes an unprofitable servant." He acted for several years as Mr. Wesley's assistant, in the Haworth Circuit. There is a short account of him in Mr. Wesley's Life, by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, in Mr. Wesley's Journals, and in the *Arm. Mag.* for Jan. 1795.

Aug. 1, 1745, The second Conference was held in Bristol. The assembly was composed of the Mess. Wesleys, and John Hodges, who were clergymen; and Thomas Richards, Samuel Larwood, Thomas Meyrick, James Wheatley, Richard Moss, John Slocombe, Herbert Jenkins, and Marmaduke Gwynne, Travelling Preachers.

THE TWO POINTS CONSIDERED WERE, 1. THE DOCTRINE OF JUSTIFICATION; 2. SANCTIFICATION.

2. How comes what is written on the subject of Justification to be so intricate and obscure? Is this obscurity from the nature of the thing itself? Or from the fault or weakness of those who have generally treated of it?—*A.* We apprehend this obscurity does not arise from the nature of the subject: But, perhaps, partly from hence, that the

the devil peculiarly labours to perplex a subject of such importance: and partly from the extreme warmth of most writers who have treated of it.

2. We affirm faith in Christ is the sole condition of justification. But does not repentance go before that faith? and supposing there be opportunity for them, fruits or works meet for repentance?—*A.* Without doubt they do.

2. How then can we deny them to be *conditions* of Justification? Is not this a mere strife of words? But is it worth while to continue a dispute on the term *condition*?—*A.* It seems not, though it has been grievously abused. But so the abuse cease, let the use remain.

2. Shall we read over together Mr. Baxter's Aphorisms concerning Justification?—*A.* By all means: And it was desired, that each person would consult the scriptures cited therein, and make what objections might occur.

2. Is an assurance of God's pardoning love absolutely necessary to our being in his favour? Or may there possibly be some exempt cases?—*A.* We dare not positively say, There are not.

2. Is such an assurance absolutely necessary to inward and outward holiness?—*A.* To inward, we apprehend it is: to outward holiness, we incline to think it is not.

2. Is it indispensably necessary to final salvation? Suppose in a *Papist*, or a *Quaker*? Or in general among those who never heard it preached?—*A.* Love hopeth all things. We know not how far any of these may fall under the case of invincible ignorance.

2. But what can we say of one of our own Society, who dies without it, as I. W. at London?—*A.* It may possibly be an exempt case, (if the fact was really so) but we determine nothing.



thing. We leave his soul in the hands of him that made it.

2. Does a man believe any longer than he sees a reconciled God?—*A.* We conceive not. But we allow there may be infinite degrees in seeing God: Even as many as there are between him who sees the sun, when it shines on his eyelids closed, and him who stands with his eyes wide open, in the full blaze of its beams.

2. Does a man believe any longer than he loves God?—*A.* In no wise. For neither circumcision nor uncircumcision avails, without faith working by love.

2. Have we duly considered the case of *Cornelius*? Was not he in the favour of God, *when his prayers and alms came up for a memorial before God? i. e.* before he believed in Christ?—*A.* It does seem that he was in some degree. But we speak not of those who have not heard the Gospel.

2. But were those works of his *splendid sins*? (as some of the Fathers termed the good works of the heathen.)—*A.* No; nor were they *done without the grace of Christ*.

2. How then can we maintain, that all works done before we have a sense of the pardoning love of God, are sin? And, as such, an abomination to him?—*A.* The works of him who has heard the Gospel, and does not believe, are not done as God hath *willed and commanded them to be done*. And yet we know not how to say, that they are an abomination to the Lord in him who feareth God, and from that principle, does the best he can.

2. Seeing there is so much difficulty in this subject, can we deal too tenderly with them that oppose

oppose us?—*A.* We cannot; unless we were to give up any part of the truth of God.

2. Is a believer *constrained* to obey God?—

*A.* At first he often is. The love of Christ constraineth him. After this, he may obey, or he may not; no constraint being laid upon him.

2. Can faith be lost, but through disobedience?—*A.* It cannot. A believer first inwardly disobeys, inclines to sin with his heart: then his intercourse with God is cut off, *i. e.* his faith is lost. After this he may fall into outward sin, being now weak, and like another man.

2. How can such a one recover Faith?—

*A.* By repenting and doing the first works, *Rev.* ii. 5.

2. Whence is it that so great a majority of those who believe fall more or less into doubt or fear?—*A.* Chiefly from their own ignorance or unfaithfulness: often from their not watching unto prayer; perhaps sometimes from some defect or want of the power of God in the preaching they hear.

2. Is there not a defect in us? Do we preach as we did at first? Have we not changed our doctrines?—*A.* 1. At first we preached almost wholly to unbelievers. To those therefore we spake almost continually of remission of sins through the death of Christ, and the nature of faith in his blood. And so we do still, among those who need to be taught the first elements of the Gospel of Christ. 2. But those in whom the foundation is already laid, we exhort to go on to perfection: Which we did not see so clearly at first; although we occasionally spoke of it from the beginning. 3. Yet we now preach, and that continually, faith in Christ, as the Prophet, Priest and

and King, at least, as clearly, as strongly, and as fully, as we did six years ago.

2. Do we not discourage visions and dreams too much? As if we condemned them *toto genere*?

—*A.* We do not intend to do this. We neither discourage nor encourage them. We learn from *Acts* ii. 19, to expect something of this kind *in the last days*. And we cannot deny that saving faith is often given in dreams and visions of the night: *which faith* we account neither *better* nor *worse*, than if it came by any other means.

2. Do not some of our assistants preach too much of the wrath, and too little of the love of God?—*A.* We fear they have leaned too much to that extreme; and hence some of their hearers may have lost the joy of faith.

2. Need we ever preach the terrors of the Lord to those who know they are accepted of him?—*A.* No; it is folly so to do: for love is to them the strongest of all motives.

2. Do we ordinarily represent a justified state so great and happy as it is?—*A.* Perhaps not. A believer walking in the light is inexpressibly great and happy.

2. Should we not have a care of depreciating justification, in order to exalt the state of full sanctification?—*A.* Undoubtedly we should beware of this: for one may insensibly slide into it.

2. How shall we effectually avoid it?—*A.* When we are going to speak of entire sanctification, let us first describe the blessings of a justified state, as strongly as possible.

2. Does not the truth of the Gospel lie very near both to *Calvinism* and *Antinomianism*?—*A.* Indeed it does: as it were within a hairs breadth. So that it is altogether foolish and sinful, because

we



we do not quite agree either with one or the other, to run from them as far as we can.

2. Wherein may we come to the very edge of *Calvinism*?—*A.* 1. In ascribing all good to the free grace of God. 2. In denying all *natural* free will, and all power antecedent to grace; and, 3. In excluding all merit from man; even for what he does by the grace of God.

2. Wherein may we come to the edge of *Antinomianism*?—*A.* 1. In exalting the merits and love of Christ. 2. In rejoicing evermore.

2. Does faith supersede (set aside the necessity of) holiness or good works?—*A.* In no wise. So far from it that it implies both, as a cause does its effects.

SECONDLY, THE DOCTRINE OF SANCTIFICATION WAS CONSIDERED.

2. When does inward sanctification begin?—*A.* In the moment we are justified. The seed of every virtue is then sown in the soul. From that time the believer gradually dies to sin, and grows in grace. Yet sin remains in him; yea, the seed of all sin, till he is sanctified throughout in spirit, soul and body.

2. What will become of a Heathen, a Papist, a Church of England Man, if he dies without being thus sanctified?—*A.* He cannot see the Lord. But none who seeks it sincerely shall or can die without it. Though *possibly* he may not attain it, till the very article of death.

2. Is it ordinarily given till a little before death?—*A.* It is not, to those that expect it no sooner, nor consequently ask for it, at least, not in faith.

2. But ought we to expect it sooner?—*A.* Why not: For although we grant, 1. That the generality

generality of believers, whom we have hitherto known, were not sanctified till near death. 2. That few of those to whom St. Paul wrote his epistles were so at the time he wrote. 3. Nor he himself at the time of writing his *former* epistles. Yet this does not prove that we may not be sanctified to-day.

Q. But would not one who was thus sanctified be incapable of worldly business?—A. He would be far more capable of it than ever, as going through all without distraction.

2. Would he be capable of marriage?—A. Why should he not?

2. Should we not beware of bearing hard on those who think they have attained?—A. We should. And the rather, because if they are faithful to the grace they have received, they are in no danger of perishing at last. No, not even if they remain in *luminous faith*, (as some term it) for many months or years, perhaps till within a little time of their spirits returning to God?

Q. In what manner should we preach entire sanctification?—A. Scarce at all to those who are not pressing forward. To those who are, always by way of promise: always *drawing* rather than *driving*.

2. How should we wait for the fulfilling of this promise?—A. In universal obedience, in keeping all the commandments, in denying ourselves, and taking up our cross daily. These are the *general* means which God hath ordained for our receiving his sanctifying grace. The *particular* are, prayer, searching the scriptures, communicating and fasting.

May 13, 1746, The third Conference was held in Bristol. Beside the Mess. Wesleys, and John Hodges, and Samuel Taylor, who were clergymen,

gymen, the following Preachers were present, Jonathan Reeves, Thomas Maxfield, Thomas Westall, Thomas Willes, and T. Glascot.

The conversation at this time was of a general nature, yet well calculated to explain and elucidate the great doctrines of the gospel.

2. Can an unbeliever (whatever he be in other respects) challenge any thing of God's justice?—*A.* Absolutely nothing but hell. And this is a point which we cannot too much insist on.

2. Do we empty men of their own righteousness, as we did at first? Do we sufficiently labour, when they begin to be convinced of sin, to take away all they lean upon? Should we not then endeavour with all our might to overturn their false foundations?—*A.* This was at first one of our principal points. And it ought to be so still. For till all other foundations are overturned they cannot build upon Christ.

2. Did we not then purposely throw them into convictions? Into strong sorrow and fear? Nay, did we not strive to make them inconsolable? Refusing to be comforted?—*A.* We did. And so we should do still. For the stronger the conviction, the speedier is the deliverance. And none so soon receive the peace of God, as those who steadily refuse all other comfort.

2. Let us consider a particular case. Was you, *Jonathan Reeves*, before you received the peace of God, convinced, that notwithstanding, all you did, or could do, you was in a state of damnation? *J. R.* I was convinced of it, as fully as that I am now alive.

2. Are you sure that conviction was from God? *J. R.* I can have no doubt but it was.

2. What do you mean by a state of damnation? *J. R.* A state, wherein if a man dies, he perisheth for ever.

Q. How



2. How did this conviction end? *J. R.* I had first a strong hope that God would deliver me; and this brought a degree of peace. But I had not that solid peace of God, till Christ was revealed in me.

2. But is not such a trust in the love of God, though it be as yet without a distinct sight of God, as reconciled to me through Christ Jesus, a low degree of justifying faith?—*A.* It is an earnest of it. But this abides for a short time only: nor is this the proper Christian faith.

2. By what faith were the Apostles *clean*, before Christ died?—*A.* By such a faith as this; by a *Jewish* faith. For the *Holy Ghost* was not then given.

2. Of whom then do we understand those words (*Isa.* l. 10.) “Who is there among you that feareth the Lord? That obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light?”—*A.* Of a believer under the *Jewish* dispensation: one in whose heart God hath not yet shined, to give him the light of the glorious love of God, in the face of Jesus Christ.

2. Who is a *Jew* inwardly?—*A.* A *servant* of God. One who sincerely obeys him out of fear. Whereas a Christian (inwardly) is a *child* of God; one who sincerely obeys him out of love.

2. But was not you, *Jonathan Reeves*, sincere before Christ was revealed in you? *J. R.* It seems to me that I was in some measure.

2. What is sincerity?—*A.* A willingness to know and do the whole will of God. The lowest species thereof seems to be *faithfulness in that which is little*.

2. Has God any regard to man's sincerity?—*A.* So far, that no man in any state can possibly please

please God without it: neither indeed in any moment wherein he is not sincere.

2. But can it be conceived that God has any regard to the sincerity of an unbeliever?—*A.* Yes, so much, that if he persevere therein, God will infallibly give him faith.

2. What regard may we conceive him to have, to the sincerity of a believer?—*A.* So much, that in every sincere believer he fulfills all the great and precious promises.

2. Whom do you term a *sincere believer*?—

*A.* One that walks in the light, as God is in the light, 1 *John* i. 7.

2. Is sincerity the same with a *single eye*?—

*A.* Not altogether. The latter refers to our intention; the former to our will or desires.

2. Is it not all in all?—*A.* All will follow persevering sincerity. God gives every thing with it; nothing without it.

2. Are not then sincerity and faith equivalent terms?—*A.* By no means. It is at least as nearly related to works as it is to faith. For example, Who is sincere before he believes? He that then does all he can: he that, according to the power he has received, brings forth fruits *meet for repentance*. Who is sincere after he believes? He that, from a sense of God's love, is zealous of all good works.

2. Is not sincerity what St. Paul terms a willing mind? 2 *Cor.* viii. 12.—*A.* Yes: If that word be taken in a general sense. For it is a constant disposition to use all the grace given.

2. But do we not then set sincerity on a level with faith?—*A.* No. For we allow a man may be sincere, and not be justified, as he may be penitent, and not be justified, (not as yet;) but

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he cannot have faith, and not be justified. The very moment he believes he is justified.

2. But do we not give up faith, and put sincerity in its place, as the condition of our acceptance with God?—*A.* We believe it is one condition of our acceptance, as repentance likewise is. And we believe it is a condition of our *continuing* in a state of acceptance. Yet we do not put it in the place of faith. It is by faith the merits of Christ are applied to my soul: But if I am not sincere, they are not applied.

2. Is not this, that *going about to establish our own righteousness*, whereof St. Paul speaks? *Rom. x. 3.*—*A.* St. Paul there manifestly speaks of unbelievers, who sought to be accepted for the sake of their own righteousness. We do not seek to be accepted for the sake of our own sincerity; but through the merits of Christ alone. Indeed, so long as any man believes, he cannot go about (in St. Paul's sense) to *establish his own righteousness*?

2. But do you consider, that we are under the covenant of grace; and that the covenant of works is now abolished?—*A.* All mankind were under the covenant of grace, from the very hour that the original promise was made. If by the covenant of works you mean, that of unsinning obedience made with *Adam* before the fall, No man but *Adam* was ever under that covenant: for it was abolished before *Cain* was born. Yet it is not so abolished, but that it will stand, in a measure, even to the end of the world, *i. e.* if we *do this*, we shall live; if not we shall die eternally. If we do well, we shall live with God in glory: if evil, we shall die the second death. For every man shall be judged in that day, and rewarded *according to his works*.

2. What



2. What means then, *To him that believeth, his faith is counted for righteousness!*—*A.* That God forgives him that is unrighteous as soon as he believes; accepting his faith instead of perfect righteousness. But then observe, universal righteousness follows, though it did not precede faith.

2. But is faith thus *counted to us for righteousness*, at whatsoever time we believe?—*A.* Yes. In whatsoever moment we believe, all our past sins vanish away. They are as though they had never been, and we stand clear in the sight of God.

2. Are not *the assurance of faith, the inspiration of the Holy Ghost, and the revelation of Christ in us*, terms nearly of the same import?—

*A.* He that denies one of them, must deny all; they are so closely connected together.

2. Are they ordinarily, where the pure Gospel is preached, essential to our acceptance?—

*A.* Undoubtedly they are; and as such, to be insisted on, in the strongest terms.

2. Is not the whole dispute of salvation by faith, or by works, a mere *strife of words*?—

*A.* In asserting salvation by faith, we mean this, 1. That pardon (salvation begun) is received by faith producing works. 2. That holiness (salvation continued) is faith working by love. 3. That heaven (salvation finished) is the reward of this faith. If you who assert salvation by works, or by faith and works, mean the same thing, (understanding by faith, the revelation of Christ in us, by salvation, pardon, holiness, and glory,) we will not strive with you at all. If you do not, this is not a *strife of words*; but the very vitals of Christianity: The essence of it is the thing in question.

2. Wherein does our doctrine now differ from that we preached when at Oxford?—*A.* Chiefly in these two points, 1. We then knew nothing of that righteousness of faith, in justification; nor, 2. Of the nature of faith itself, as implying consciousness of pardon.

2. May not some degree of the love of God, go before a distinct sense of justification?—*A.* We believe it may.

2. Can any degree of sanctification or holiness?—*A.* Many degrees of outward holiness may: yea, and some degree of meekness, and several other tempers, which would be branches of Christian holiness, but that they do not spring from Christian principles. But the abiding love of God cannot spring, but from faith in a pardoning God. And no true Christian holiness can exist, without that love of God for its foundation.

2. Is every man, as soon as he believes, a new creature, sanctified, pure in heart? Has he then a new heart? Does Christ dwell therein? And is he a temple of the Holy Ghost?—*A.* All these things may be affirmed of every believer, in a true sense. Let us not therefore contradict those who maintain it. Why should we contend about words?

June 4, 1747, Mr. Wesley drew up the following Rules and Instructions for the Stewards of the London Society. They were recommended to all the Stewards in the connection, by being published in the Journals.

“ 1. You are to be men full of the Holy Ghost, and of wisdom; that you may do all things in a manner acceptable to God.—2. You are to be present every Tuesday and Thursday morning, in order to transact the temporal affairs of the Society.—3. You are to begin and end every

every meeting with earnest prayer to God, for a blessing on all your undertakings.—4. You are to produce your accounts the first Tuesday in every month, that they may be transcribed into the Ledger.—5. You are in the absence of the Minister, to take it in turn, month by month, to be chairman. The chairman is to see that all the rules be punctually observed, and immediately to check him who breaks any of them.—6. You are to do nothing without the consent of the Minister, either actually had, or reasonably presumed.—7. You are to consider whenever you meet, “God is here.” Therefore, be serious. Utter no trifling word. Speak as in his presence, and to the glory of his great name.—8. When any thing is debated, let one at once stand up and speak, the rest giving attention. And let him speak, just loud enough to be heard, in love and in the spirit of meekness.—9. You are continually to pray and endeavour, that a holy harmony of soul may in all things subsist among you: that in every step you may keep the unity of the spirit, in the bond of peace.—10. In all debates, you are to watch over your spirits, avoiding as fire, all clamour and contention, being *swift to hear, slow to speak*; in honour every man preferring another before himself.—11. If you cannot relieve, do not grieve the poor. Give them soft words if nothing else. Abstain from either sour looks or harsh words. Let them be glad to come, even though they should go empty away.—12. Put yourselves in the place of every poor man, and deal with him as you would God should deal with you.”\*

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June

\* The Stewards in London were many in number at that time. They visited the sick, and relieved the poor. All the Class-



June 16, 1747, The fourth Conference was held in London. The following persons were present with Mess. John and Charles Wesley. Charles Manning, Vicar of Hayes. Richard Thomas Bateman, Rector of St. Bartholomews the Great. Henry Piers, Vicar of Bexley. Howell Harris, and Thomas Hardwick. The two last were Lay-Preachers.

THE TWO POINTS THEY CONSIDERED WERE, 1. THE DOCTRINE OF THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH; AND, 2. OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

1. OF THE ASSURANCE OF FAITH.

2. Is Justifying Faith, a divine assurance, that *Christ loved me and gave himself for me?*—

*A.* We believe it is.

2. What is the judgment of most of the serious dissenters concerning this?—*A.* They generally allow, That many believers have such an assurance: and, that it is to be desired and prayed for by all. But then they affirm, that this is the highest species, or degree of faith: that it is not the common privilege of believers. Consequently, they deny that this is justifying faith, or necessarily implied therein.

2. And are there not strong reasons for their opinion? For instance: if the true believers of old had not this assurance, then it is not necessarily implied in justifying faith: but the true believers of old had not this assurance?—*A.* *David* and

Class-Money, amounting to several hundred pounds in the year, was then, and for many years after, given to the poor, through their hands. They had much business to do, and these Rules were therefore the more needful. But they are excellent for any religious meeting.

and many more of the believers of old, undeniably had this assurance. But even if the Jews had it not, it would not follow, that this is not implied in *Christian* faith.

2. But do you not know, that the apostles themselves had it not, till after the day of *Pentecost*?—*A.* The apostles themselves had not the proper Christian faith, till after the day of *Pentecost*.

2. But were not those Christian believers, in the proper sense, to whom St. John wrote his first epistle? Yet to these he says, *Chap. v. 13. These things have I written unto you that believe on the name of the Son of God, That ye may know that ye have eternal life, and that ye may believe on the name of the Son of God.*—*A.* This does not prove, that they did not know they had eternal life, any more than that they did not believe. His plain meaning is, “I have written unto you, that you may be the more established in the faith,” therefore it does not follow from hence, that they had not this assurance: but only, that there are degrees therein.

2. But were not the *Thessalonians* true believers? Yet they had not this assurance: they had only a good hope, *2 Thess. ii. 16.*—*A.* The text you refer to, runs thus: *Now our Lord Jesus Christ himself, and God, even our Father, which hath loved us, and given us everlasting consolation and good hope, through grace: comfort your hearts and establish you, in every good word and work.* This good hope does not exclude, but necessarily implies a strong assurance of the love of God.

2. But does not St. Paul say even of himself, *1 Cor. iv. 4. I know nothing by myself; yet am I not hereby justified?*—*A.* He does not say of himself

himself here, that he was not justified; or that he did not not know it. But only, that though he had a conscience void of offence, yet this did not justify him before God. And must not every believer say the same? This therefore is wide of the point.

2. But does he not disclaim any such assurance in those words, 1 Cor. ii. 3. *I was with you in weakness and in fear, and in much trembling?*—A. By no means. For these words do not imply any fear either of death or hell. They express only a deep sense of his utter insufficiency for the great work wherein he was engaged.

2. Does he not exclude Christians in general from such an assurance; when he bids them *work out their salvation with fear and trembling*, Phil. ii. 12?—A. No more than from love; which is always joined with filial fear, and reverential trembling. And the same answer is applicable to all those texts which exhort a believer to fear.

2. But does not matter of fact prove, that justifying faith does not necessarily imply assurance? For can you believe that such a person as I. A. or E. V. who have so much integrity, zeal, and fear of God, and walk so unblameably in all things, is void of justifying faith? Can you suppose such as these to be under the wrath, and under the curse of God? Especially if you add to this, that they are continually longing, striving, and praying for the assurance which they have not?—A. This contains the very strength of the cause: and sometimes inclines us to think, that some of these may be exempt cases. But however that may be, we answer, 1. It is dangerous to ground a general doctrine on a few particular examples. 2. Men may have many good tempers, and a blameless life, speaking in a loose sense,



sense, by nature and habit, with preventing grace; and yet not have faith and the love of God. 3. It is scarcely possible for us to know all the circumstances relating to such persons, so as to judge certainly concerning them. 4. But this we know, if Christ is not revealed in them, they are not *Christian* believers.

2. But what will become of them, suppose they die in this state?—*A.* This is a supposition not to be made. They cannot die in this state. They must go backward or forward. If they continue to seek, they will surely find righteousness, peace, and joy in the Holy Ghost. We are confirmed in this belief by the many instances we have seen, of such as these finding peace at the last hour. And it is not impossible, but others may then be made partakers of like precious faith, and yet go hence without giving any outward proof of the change which God hath wrought.

#### OF ENTIRE SANCTIFICATION.

2. How much is allowed by our brethren who differ from us, with regard to entire sanctification?—*A.* They grant, 1. That every one must be entirely sanctified, in the article of death. 2. That till then, a believer daily grows in grace, comes nearer and nearer to perfection. 3. That we ought to be continually pressing after this, and to exhort all others so to do.

2. What do we allow them?—*A.* We grant, 1. That many of those who have died in the faith, yea, the greater part of those we have known, were not sanctified throughout, not made perfect in love, till a little before death. 2. That the term “sanctified,” is continually applied by St. Paul,

Paul, to all that were justified; who were true believers. 3. That by this term alone, he rarely, (if ever) means, saved from all sin. 4. That consequently, it is not proper to use it in this sense, without adding the word "wholly, entirely," or the like. 5. That the inspired writers almost continually speak of, or to, those who were justified; but very rarely, either of or to those who were wholly sanctified. 6. That consequently, it behoves us to speak in public almost continually of the state of Justification: but more rarely, at least in full and explicit terms, concerning entire sanctification.

2. What then is the point wherein we divide?  
—*A.* It is this: whether we should expect to be saved from all sin, before the article of death.

2. Is there any clear scripture *promise* of this? That God will save us from all sin?—*A.* There is, *Psa.* cxxx. 8. *Ezek.* xxxvi. 25—29. 2 *Cor.* vii. 1. *Deut.* xxx. 6.

2. But does any *assertion* answerable to this occur in the New Testament?—*A.* There does, *John* iii. 8. *Eph.* v. 25—27. *Rom.* viii. 3, 4.

2. Does the New Testament afford any farther ground, for expecting to be saved from all sin?—*A.* Undoubtedly it does, both in those prayers and commands which are equivalent to the strongest assertions.

2. What prayers do you mean?—*A.* Prayers for entire sanctification; which were there no such thing, would be mere mockery of God, *Matt.* vi. 13. *John* xvii. 20, 21—23. *Eph.* iii. 14—19. 1 *Thes.* v. 23.

What command is there to the same effect?  
—*A.* *Matt.* v. 48. *Matt.* xxii. 27. But if the love of God fill all the heart, there can be no sin there.

2. But

2. But how does it appear that this is to be done before the article of death?—*A.* 1. From the very nature of a command, which is not given to the dead, but to the living. Therefore, *Thou shalt love God with all thy heart*, cannot mean, thou shalt do this when thou diest, but while thou livest. 2. From express texts of Scripture, *Titus* ii. 11—14. *Luke* i. 74, 75.

2. Is there any example in scripture of persons who had attained to this?—*A.* Yes; St. John, and all those of whom he says in his first epistle, *Chap.* iv. 17. *Herein is our love made perfect, that we may have boldness in the day of judgment, because as he is, so are we in this world.*

2. But why are there not more examples of this kind, recorded in the New Testament?—*A.* It does not become us to be peremptory in this matter. One reason might possibly be, because the Apostles wrote to the Church, while it was in a state of infancy. Therefore they might mention such persons the more sparingly, lest they should give strong meat to babes.

2. Can you shew one such example now?—Where is he that is thus perfect?—*A.* To some who make this enquiry, one might answer, if I knew one here, I would not tell *you*. For you do not enquire out of love. You are like *Herod*, you only seek the young child to slay it. But more directly we answer. There are numberless reasons, why there should be few, if any indisputable examples. What inconveniences would this bring on the person himself, set as a mark for all to shoot at! What a temptation would it be to others, not only to men who know not God, but to believers themselves! How hardly would they refrain from idolizing such a person! And yet, how unprofitable to gain-sayers! For if they hear not  
Moses



Moses and the Prophets, Christ and his Apostles, neither would they be persuaded, though one rose from the dead.

2. Suppose one had attained to this, would you advise him to speak of it?—*A.* Not to them who know not God. It would only provoke them to contradict and blaspheme: nor to any without some particular reason, without some particular good in view. And then they should have an especial care, to avoid all appearance of boasting: and to speak more loudly and convincingly by their lives, than they can do by their tongues.

2. Is it a sin not to believe those who say they have attained?—*A.* By no means, even though they said true. We ought not hastily to believe, but to suspend our judgment, till we have full and strong proof.

2. But are we not apt to have a secret distaste to any who say they are saved from all sin?—

*A.* Is it very possible we may; and that on several grounds: partly from a concern for the honour of God, and the good of souls, who may be hurt, yea, or turned out of the way, if these are not what they profess. Partly from a kind of implicit envy at those who speak of higher attainments than our own: and partly from our slowness and unreadiness of heart, to believe the works of God.

2. Does not the harshly preaching perfection tend to bring believers into a kind of bondage, or slavish fear?—*A.* It does. Therefore we should always place it in the most amiable light, so that it may excite only hope, joy and desire.

2. Why may we not continue in the joy of faith, even till we are made perfect?—*A.* Why indeed. Since holy grief does not quench this joy. Since even while we are under the cross, while

while we deeply partake of the sufferings of Christ, we may rejoice with joy unspeakable.

2. Do we not discourage believers from rejoicing evermore?—*A.* We ought not so to do. Let them all their life long, rejoice unto God, so it be with reverence. And even if lightness or pride should mix with their joy, let us not strike at the joy itself, (this is the gift of God) but at that lightness or pride, that the evil may cease and the good remain.

2. Ought we to be anxiously careful about perfection? Least we should die before we have attained it?—*A.* In no wise. We ought to be thus *careful for nothing*, neither spiritual nor temporal.

2. But ought we not to be *troubled*, on account of the sinful nature which still remains in us?—*A.* It is good for us to have a deep sense of this, and to be much ashamed before the Lord. But this should only incite us, the more earnestly to turn unto Christ every moment, and to draw light, and life, and strength from him, that we may go on, conquering and to conquer. And therefore when the sense of our sin most abounds, the sense of his love should much more abound.

2. Will our joy or our trouble increase, as we grow in grace?—*A.* Perhaps both. But without doubt our joy in the Lord will increase as our *love* increases.

2. Is not the teaching believers to be continually poring upon their inbred sin, the ready way to make them forget that they were purged from their former sins?—*A.* We find by experience it is. Or to make them under-value, and account it a little thing. Whereas indeed (though there are still greater gifts behind) this is inexpressibly great and glorious.

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At

At this Meeting the minutes of the former Conferences respecting doctrines, together with these now agreed to, were first collected together and printed. Since that time this has often been done; and, as it is natural to expect, with considerable additions and explanations.

In the next month, Mr. Wesley wrote the following letter to his brother. I insert it because it shews that he had thought more deeply respecting the nature of *Justifying Faith* after the last Conference. He was afterwards more accurate on that head, and spoke of it agreeably to the sentiments expressed in this letter.

“ Dear Brother,

“ Yesterday I was thinking on a *desideratum* among us, a *Genesis problematica* on justifying faith. A skeleton of it (which you may fill up, or any one that has leisure) I have roughly set down.

“ Is justifying faith, *a sense of pardon*? *Negatur*,” (It is denied.)

“ I. Every one is deeply concerned to understand this question well: but Preachers most of all: least they should either make them sad whom God hath not made sad; or, encourage them to say, peace, where there is no peace. Some years ago we heard nothing of justifying faith, or a sense of pardon: so that when we did hear of them, the theme was quite new to us; and we might easily, especially in the heat and hurry of controversy, lean too much either to the one hand or to the other.

“ II. By justifying faith I mean, that faith, which whosoever hath it not, is under the *wrath* and the *curse* of God. By a sense of pardon, I mean



mean a distinct, explicit assurance that my sins are forgiven. I allow, 1. That there is such an explicit assurance. 2. That it is the *common* privilege of *real* Christians. 3. That it is the *proper Christian faith*, which purifieth the heart, and overcometh the world. But I cannot allow, that justifying faith is such an assurance, or necessarily connected therewith.

“ III. Because, if justifying faith *necessarily* implies such an explicit assurance of pardon, then every one who has it not, and every one so long as he has it not, is under the *wrath* and under the *curse* of God. But this is a supposition contrary to scripture, as well as to experience. Contrary to, *Isa. l. 10.* *Who is among you, that feareth the Lord, that obeyeth the voice of his servant, that walketh in darkness and hath no light? Let him trust in the name of the Lord, and stay upon his God.* Contrary to *Acts x. 34.* *Of a truth I perceive, that God is no respecter of persons, but in every nation, he that feareth Him, and worketh righteousness is accepted with Him.*

“ Contrary to experience: for I. R. &c. had peace with God, no fear, no doubt, before they had *that sense of pardon.* And so have I frequently had. Again, The assertion, that justifying faith is a sense of pardon, is contrary to *reason*: it is *flatly absurd.* For how can a *sense of our having received pardon,* be the *condition* of our receiving it!

“ IV. If you object, 1. ‘ I. T. St. Paul, &c. had this sense:’ I grant they had; but they were justified before they had it. 2. ‘ We know fifteen hundred persons who have this assurance.’ Perhaps so: but this does not prove, they were not justified till they received it. 3. ‘ We have been

exceedingly blessed in preaching this doctrine.' We have been blessed in preaching the great truths of the gospel: although we tacked to them, in the simplicity of our hearts, a proposition which was not true. 4. 'But does not our church give this account of justifying faith?' I am sure she does of *saving* or *Christian* faith: I think she does of justifying faith too. But to the law and to the testimony, All men may err: but the word of the Lord shall stand for ever."

Mr. Wesley remained firm in the sentiments here expressed; but he always declared, that the *proper Christian Faith* was accompanied with an assurance of God's pardoning love, and that none should rest short of it.

In this year, *Mr. Thomas Williams*, one of the Preachers, visited Dublin, and preached in the streets. He sent an account of his success to Mr. Wesley, who landed there on the 4th day of August following. From that time till his death, he visited that city once in every two or three years, and generally took a *tour* through the whole kingdom. He also sent over Preachers, who were, at length, instrumental in planting Methodism in every county in Ireland.

## CHAPTER THE THIRD.

*From the Conference in 1748, to that in London  
in 1763.*

**JUNE 22, 1748,** The fifth Conference was held in Bristol. From this time till the Conference in 1763, the minutes were not published. It does not appear from the *Journals*, that there was a Conference every year, during this period, though it appears there were two in some years, My worthy friend Mr. Christopher Hopper, (the oldest Methodist Preacher living) informs me by a letter, dated Oct. 30, 1799, that there was none in the year 1749. And he says of one in the year 1750, "We had something like a little Conference." Mr. Wesley, it seems, directed the Preachers where they should labour, by letter, and conferred with those whom he could collect in his journeys; by which means the circuits were supplied with Preachers, and the rules of the Society enforced.

At this time Kingswood School was opened, near Bristol, for the education of the Preachers children. There had been one erected there before for the children of the Colliers. For many years several of the Methodists sent their children to be educated there. It is now used wholly for the education of the Travelling Preachers children. Mr. Wesley thus speaks of it,

F 3

"Friday



“ Friday, June 24, 1748, being the day we had appointed for opening the School at Kingswood, I preached on—“ Train up a child in the way he should go, and when he is old he will not depart from it,” *Prov.* xxii. 6. My Brother and I then administered the Lord’s-supper to many who came from far. We then agreed on the general rules of the School, which we published soon after.”

From this time a public collection has been made through all the Societies once in every year, for Kingswood School. In order to encourage the people to contribute to its support, Mr. Wesley in the year 1756, asked the Conference, “ What can be done to make the Methodists more sensible of the excellency of Kingswood School.” The answer agreed upon, is published in the large minutes of the Conference. The people were well pleased with it, for since that time they have liberally supported the school.

1749. This year Mr. Wesley began to compile the Christian Library, and completed it in fifty volumes duodecimo. He published it under the following title, “ A Christian Library: consisting of Extracts from, and Abridgments of, the choicest pieces of Practical Divinity; which have been published in the English Tongue.” It is a very useful work, but the expence was too great for a poor people, therefore it is not much known among the Methodists. Mr. Wesley remarked concerning it in the year 1752, “ It cost me two hundred pounds: perhaps the next generation may know its worth.”

1749. As Mr. Hopper observes, there was no Conference this year. From the Journal it appears there was a little meeting of that kind in London, Aug. 20, and another at Leeds, Oct. 6: they

they may unitedly be considered as the sixth Conference at which Mr. Wesley presided.

In the latter end of this year, Mr. Hopper commenced an Itinerant Preacher. In the former year, (1748) while he lived at Hindley-Hill, in Allendale, in the North of England, his labours were very useful. He formed Societies at Westallen, Alesden, Ninthead, and Waredale. He tells us in his "Memoirs," *Arm. Mag. vol. iv. page 30*, "There was then no provision made for Preachers, or Preachers Wives: nor any funds amongst the Methodists. He that had a staff might take it, go without it, or stay at home," if he did not chuse to trust God in this way. The Societies at that time, provided the preachers with those things which were necessary without any fixed allowance.

1750. In February of this year, the great persecution began in Cork. The mob was headed by *Nicholas Butler*, a *ballad-singer*, and committed great outrages. *Butler* was secretly encouraged by some of the Magistrates, for the Grand Jury in the Spring following, "Presented Charles Wesley, Thomas Williams, Robert Swindels, Jonathan Reeves, Samuel Larwood, Joseph Tucker, Charles Skelton, William Tucker, and Daniel Sullivan, as persons of ill fame, vagabonds, and common disturbers of his Majesty's Peace; and praying that they might be transported! These were all Preachers, except the last, who was a respectable citizen. His crime was, that he received the Preachers into his house. Mr. Wesley observed ironically, "This memorable presentment is worthy to be preserved in the annals of Ireland, to all succeeding generations." These good men were all liberated in the most honourable manner, at the following Assizes; and the

the Preachers have ever since been treated with peculiar respect in the city of Cork.

March 8, 1750, The seventh Conference was held in Bristol. Mr. Wesley only says concerning it, "I desired all the Preachers that were in Bristol, to meet me at four in the afternoon; and so every day while I was in town."

In the month of July, in this year, *Thomas Walsh* began to preach at Shronill, within fifteen miles of the city of Limerick, in Ireland: being advised to it by Mr. Wesley. He was one of the most useful and laborious of the Methodist Preachers, during the short time he lived, which was only about eight years after he began to travel. He died the 8th day of April, 1759, in the twenty-eighth year of his age, greatly lamented by all that knew him. His life was afterwards published by Mr. James Morgan, and is greatly esteemed by the people.

Aug. 25, Mr. John Jane, one of the Preachers, died at Epworth in Lincolnshire. His last words were, "I find the love of God in Christ Jesus." All his clothes, linnen, and woollen; stockings, hat and wig, were not sufficient to answer his funeral expences, which amounted to one pound seventeen shillings and three pence. All the money he had was, one shilling and four pence. Upon this Mr. Wesley observes, "It was enough for any unmarried Preacher of the Gospel to leave to his executors."

March 11, 1751, The eighth Conference began in Bristol. Mr. Wesley remarks on this occasion, "Many of our Preachers came from various parts. My spirit was much bowed down among them, fearing some of them were perverted



verted from the simplicity of the Gospel. But I was revived at the sight of John Haime, John Nelson, and those who came with them in the evening; knowing they held the truth as it is in Jesus, and did not hold it in unrighteousness." He was however pleasingly disappointed, as those were also who had suggested these fears to him. "Monday, says he, our Conference began, and the more we conversed the more brotherly love increased. The same spirit we found on *Tuesday* and *Wednesday*. I expected to have heard many objections to our first doctrines. But none appeared to have any: we seemed to be all of one mind as well as one heart." Mr. Wesley from this time was not so ready to believe such reports. This will appear in the sequel of this History.

In April of this year, Mr. Wesley visited Scotland, accompanied by *Mr. Christopher Hopper*. This was the beginning of Methodism in Scotland. He observes, "We met with greater success than we expected." It has not prospered much in that country. One great design in sending Preachers thither is, to make a stand against the overflowing of Arianism and Socinianism in that kingdom.

On the 25th of June, *James Wheatley*, one of the Preachers, who had grievously sinned, was expelled from the Connexion: this was the first instance of that kind. Mr. Wesley and his brother expelled him by giving him the following note, dated on this day, and which they afterwards found it necessary to make public.

"Because you have wrought folly in Israel, grieved the Holy Spirit of God, betrayed your own soul into temptation and sin, and the souls of many others, whom you ought, even at the peril of your own life, to have guarded against all sin;  
because

because you have given occasion to the enemies of God, whenever they shall know these things, to blaspheme the ways and truth of God.—We can in no wise receive you as a fellow-labourer, till we see clear proofs of your real and deep repentance. Of this you have given us no proof yet. You have not so much as named one single person, in all England or Ireland, with whom you have behaved ill, except those we knew before.

“ The least and lowest proof of such repentance which we can receive is this. That till our next Conference, (which we hope will be in October) you abstain both from Preaching and practising Physic. If you do not, we are clear; we cannot answer for the consequence.

JOHN WESLEY.

CHARLES WESLEY.”

In this same year, the disputes began in the connexion respecting our union with the Church of England. They seem to have been owing to the following causes:—1. Many dissenters had been converted to God by the preaching of the Methodists. They joined the Society, and some of them were made *Leaders*, and also became *Preachers*. These, though men of real piety, retained something of their old prejudices against National Church establishments. 2. Some who were originally Church-people, changed their sentiments, on account of the illiberal treatment they met with from some of the *Clergy* of the established church, and also from the want of piety among the people. 3. Some of the *Preachers* also were rather intemperate in their zeal in pointing out the crimes of wicked ministers. The disputes arising from these things caused uneasiness to the Societies while Mr. Wesley lived, but it

it greatly increased in the first four years after his death : and hence a more liberal plan became absolutely necessary.

December 26, Mr. John Bennet, who had joined Mr. Wesley in the year 1747, and had been very useful in Derbyshire, Cheshire, and Lancashire, at length separated. He made the breach, on this day, in Bolton-la-moors. He called Mr. Wesley a Pope, and charged him with preaching Popery ! and also with denying the perseverance of the saints, and teaching sinless perfection ! The first two charges were totally false. The two latter misrepresented. Mr. Wesley taught that a believer might, though he need not, fall from grace : he never used the term *sinless perfection* ; but he exhorted believers to love God with all their heart, which he termed *Christian perfection*. Mr. Bennet's words made a noise for a few years, and disturbed the Societies where he was most popular. Then the storm blew over ; the Lord supported Mr. Wesley, and the Methodists recovered more than they had lost.

October 16, 1752, the ninth Conference was held in Bristol. At this time it was agreed that the Preachers should receive a stipend of twelve pounds per annum, in order to provide themselves with necessaries. Before this period the Stewards of each Society supplied the Preachers with what they wanted, so that they received no money except what was voluntary from Individuals, and a little from the Stewards to pay their travelling expences. The consequence was, some popular Preachers had abundance, while others were comparatively destitute. By this regulation the evil was remedied. This allowance continues the same in most Societies to this day, though greatly inadequate to the purpose for which it is given.

May



May 22, 1753, The tenth Conference began in Leeds. This was the first time of its being held in that town. There were thirty Preachers present. Mr. Wesley's account of it is, "Most of our Preachers met, and we conversed freely together, morning and afternoon, to the end of the week; when our Conference ended with the same blessing as it began. God giving us all to be not only of one heart, but of one judgment."

May 22, 1754, The eleventh Conference began in London. Mr. Wesley says of it, "The spirit of peace and love was in the midst of us. Before we parted, we all willingly signed an agreement, not to act independantly of each other; so that the breach lately made, has only united us more closely together than ever." The breach alluded to was, Samuel Larwood, Jonathan Reeves, John Whitworth, Charles Skelton, and John Edwards left the Itinerant plan, and got independant congregations for themselves in different parts of England. They were eminent men in the connexion at this time, and probably would not have ceased to travel if there had been a provision for their wives and children.

This was the first time that the Preachers confirmed their love to each other by signing their names to their resolutions. This measure has been often recurred to since that time, and it has been productive of the happiest effects.

May 6, 1755, The twelfth Conference began in Leeds. "The point, says Mr. Wesley, on which we desired all the preachers to speak their minds at large was, whether we ought to separate from the Church? Whatever was advanced on the one side or the other was seriously and calmly considered.

considered: and on the third day we were all fully agreed in that general conclusion.” “That whether it was *lawful* or not, it was no ways *expedient*.”

In the month of August, in this year, the renewing of the Covenant, which is now generally practised in all the larger Societies, on the last night of the old, or the first Sunday of the new year, was begun by Mr. Wesley in London. After reciting the tenor of the Covenant, in the words of that blessed man, *Richard Allen*, the people stand up, or lift up their right hand in token of assent. It is generally a very solemn season, and productive of blessed effects.

August 26, 1756, The thirteenth Conference was held in Bristol. Mr. Wesley's account of it is, “About fifty of us being met, the rules of the Society were read over, and carefully considered one by one. But we did not find any that could be spared. So we all agreed, to abide by them all, and to recommend them with our might.

“We then largely considered the necessity of keeping in the Church, and using the Clergy with tenderness. And there was no dissenting voice. God gave us all to be of one mind, and of one judgment.

“The rules of the Bands were read and considered, one by one: which after some verbal alterations, we all agreed to observe and enforce.

“The rules of Kingswood school were also read and considered, one by one. And we were all convinced they were agreeable to scripture and reason. In consequence of which, it was agreed, 1. That a short account of the design and present state of the school be read by every Assistant in every Society. 2. That a subscription for it be be-

gun in every place, and (if need be) a collection made every year.

“ My brother and I closed the Conference by a solemn declaration of our purpose, never to separate from the Church. And all our brethren concurred therein.”

The good produced by thus leading the Preachers to consider their first principles, made Mr. Wesley often do the same while he lived.

It is probable this was the time that Mr. Wesley wrote and published his twelve reasons against separating from the Church of England ; for in the year 1758, we find Mr. Charles Wesley adding his testimony to them ; only with regard to the *first* reason, He believed it neither *lawful* nor expedient for *him* to separate from it. This declaration is now added to the tract itself.

1757. Mr. Wesley observes, that on May 21, in this year, “ being at *Keighly*, in Yorkshire, I had a little Conference with our Preachers ;” but this did not prevent the regular Meeting. Accordingly we find, that on August 4, the fourteenth Conference began in London. Mr. Wesley’s account of it is, “ From the first hour to the last, there was no jarring string, but all was harmony and love.”

In the month of August, in this year, Mr. Alexander Mather was received as a Traveling Preacher. In his Memoirs, published in the *Arm. Mag.* vol. iii. page 149. “ He says, It was agreed that I should travel, and that my wife should have the fixed allowance of four shillings per week, paid her by the Stewards of the London Society, Mess. Brott’s and Hobbins. This was the beginning of that settlement for Preachers Wives, which (with the addition of forty shillings a year)



a year) continues to this day." Mr. Mather was the first married Preacher taken into the connexion, and his Wife was the first provided for by the Methodists. He has been from the first day until now, a very laborious and useful Preacher.

August 10, 1758, The fifteenth Conference was held in Bristol. Mr. Wesley says of it, "It began and ended in perfect harmony."

August 8, 1759, The sixteenth Conference began in London. Mr. Wesley observes concerning it, "Our time was almost entirely employed, in examining, whether the spirit and lives of our Preachers were suitable to their profession? Great was the unanimity and love that reigned among us. And if there were any who hoped or feared the contrary, they were happily disappointed."

From this time the Moral, Religious, and Ministerial characters of the Preachers have been strictly examined at the Conference in every year. The punishments inflicted on an offending brother are, 1. A rebuke from the President before the whole Conference. 2. The being put back on trial. 3. Expulsion from the body. These punishments are inflicted according to the nature of the offence.

August 29, 1760, The seventeenth Conference was held in Bristol. Mr. Wesley had been detained in Ireland by contrary winds. When he got to Bristol he observes, "I spent the two following days with the Preachers, who had been waiting for me all the week; and their love and unanimity was such as soon made me forget all my labour." This circumstance clearly shews

there could be no Methodist Conference while Mr. Wesley lived unless he were present, or had appointed the person who held it.

In this year a great revival of religion took place among the Methodists. Many persons, men and women, professed to be cleansed from all unrighteousness, and made perfect in love, in a moment; often while hearing the word, but more frequently while at prayer, or while others were praying for them. Mr. Wesley thus speaks of it, "Here began that glorious work of sanctification, which had been nearly at a stand for twenty years. From time to time it spread, first through various parts of Yorkshire, afterwards in London, then through most parts of England, next to Dublin, Limerick, and through all the south and west of Ireland. And wherever the work of sanctification increased, the whole work of God increased in all its branches. Many were convinced of sin, many justified, and many backsliders healed." It continued to increase for some years. When satan could not *hinder*, he strove to *disgrace* it; for a spirit of Enthusiasm got into the London Society, and especially among those who were most zealous in this work. It manifested itself, 1. In trusting to their own feelings and impressions, more than to the Word of God. 2. In using irreverent and improper expressions in prayer. 3. In pretending to the Gift of the discernment of Spirits, and Prophesying, *i. e.* foretelling things to come. And, 4. In condemning those who disapproved of their conduct, as being *blind*, *dead*, and *persecutors*. These things disturbed the Connexion for some time, and ended in the separation of Mr. Maxfield, (the first Itinerant Preacher that was employed by Mr. Wesley,) and George Bell, the two chiefs of these Zealots, from Mr. Wesley. They

They drew after them a considerable number of those who approved of their extravagant conduct

There were several divisions of this kind during the long period of Mr. Wesley's life, but none of them were so considerable as to shake the stability of the Connexion. Established Christians know, that such things were in the purest days of the Church, and that in the present condition of mankind, they cannot be wholly prevented.

September 1, 1761. The eighteenth Conference was held in London. At this time, Mr. Wesley observes, "The work of God was swiftly encreasing. Meantime the enemy was not wanting in his endeavours, to sow *tares* among the good seed. I saw this clearly, but durst not use violence, lest in plucking up the *tares*, I should root up the *wheat* also." He continues, "Tuesday, September 1, our Conference began, and ended on Saturday. I strove to guard both Preachers and People, from running into extremes on the one hand or the other." These extremes were, 1. Despising this work altogether, on account of the extravagancies of some who were engaged in it. 2. Justifying all those extravagancies, as if they were essential to it. Mr. Wesley ever observed the sober path of Scripture and reason.

August 9, 1762. The nineteenth Conference was held in Leeds. Mr. Wesley's account of it is, "Our Conference began on Tuesday morning. And we had great reason to praise God for his gracious presence, from the beginning to the end."

Nov. 1, in this year Mr. Wesley wrote his earnest letter to Mr. Maxfield, who was at the head of the ungovernable party in London. It begins his thirteenth Journal. The following



sentence shews his sentiments respecting *Separation*. "I disapprove, in one word, your *divisive* spirit. Indeed I do not believe, that any of you either design or desire a separation. But you do not enough *fear, abhor and detest* it; shuddering at the very thought. And all the preceding tempers tend to it, and gradually prepare you for it. Observe, I tell you before! God grant you may immediately and affectionately take the warning." But he did not take it, so the separation took place, as is before related.

In the following October, Mr. Wesley observes, "Being at Bristol, one who had adorned the Gospel in life and death, having desired that I should preach her funeral sermon, I went with a few friends to the house, *and sang before the body to the room*. I did this the rather, to shew my approbation of that solemn custom, and to encourage others to follow it. This custom is still in some degree attended to, but it is rather losing ground.

At the close of this year, Mr. Wesley observes, "Many years ago my brother frequently said, 'Your Day of Penticost is not fully come. But I doubt not, it will. And you will then hear of persons sanctified, as frequently as you do now of persons justified.' "Any unprejudiced person who has read the accounts in my Journals may observe, that it was now fully come." He frequently noted the work at this time, as being what St. Paul calls, *the Perfecting of the Saints*.

## CHAPTER THE FOURTH.

*From the Conference in 1763, to that in 1765.*

THE twentieth Conference was held in London, July 1763. All the Minutes of the former Conferences, respecting discipline, were now, for the first time published. As they afford proper materials for this history, I shall extract the greater part of them. Mr. Wesleys account of this Conference, which must have sat a long time on account of what was done at it is, "It was a great blessing that we had peace among ourselves, while so many were making themselves ready for battle. This alludes to the recent separation, (which took place in the London Society) of which *Mr. Maxfield* was the Leader.

MINUTES OF THE CONFERENCE HELD IN LONDON, 1763.

2. Can there be any such thing as a general union of our Societies throughout England?—

A. A proposal for this was made some time since. The substance of it is this. "May not all the Societies in England be considered as one Body, united by one Spirit? May not that in London, the Mother Society, consult for the good of all the Societies? May not the Stewards of that Society answer letters from all parts: and give advice, at least in temporals?"

2. But

2. But how can the state of all the Societies be known to the Stewards of London?—*A.* Very easily by means of the Assistants.

2. Who is the Assistant?—*A.* That Preacher in each circuit who is appointed from time to time to take charge of the Societies and the other Preachers therein.

Mr. Wesley appointed these to *assist* him in the government of the Societies. He described how they should be qualified for their office, and what were their peculiar duties. They were first called Superintendants; and since Mr. Wesley's death, as the office is no longer a *relative* one, this name has been restored. It resembles that of Pastor, Elder, or Bishop in the Primitive Church, with this difference, the Primitive Bishops held their office for life, unless excommunicated; not so the Methodist Superintendants, being Itinerants they are often changed. The union of the Methodists is one of the chief causes of their increase; but Mr. Wesley soon found that this could not be effected by the Stewards, who attend only to the temporal affairs of their respective Societies. But by the efforts of the Itinerant Preachers it was soon accomplished.

The qualifications of an Assistant as laid down by Mr. Wesley are, "1. Walking closely with God, and having his work greatly at heart. 2. Understanding and loving discipline, the Methodist discipline in particular. 3. Loving the Church of England, and resolving never to separate from it."

The business of an Assistant is, 1. "To see that the other Preachers behave well, and want nothing. 2. To visit the Classes quarterly in each place, regulating the Bands, and delivering new Tickets. 3. To keep watch nights and love feasts.

4. To



4. To take in, or put out of the Bands, or Society.  
 5. To hold quarterly meetings, and therein diligently to enquire both into the spiritual and temporal state of each Society. 6. To take care that every Society be duly supplied with books, and that the money for them be constantly returned.  
 7. To send from every quarterly meeting a circumstantial account to London of every remarkable conversion, and of every one who dies in the triumph of faith. 8. To take exact lists of the Societies every *Easter*, and bring them to the next Conference. 9. To meet the married men, the married women, the single men, and the single women, in the large Societies, once a quarter.  
 10. To see that every Society have a private room, and a set of the *Library* for the Helper.  
 11. To write an account to Mr. Wesley of all the defects of the Helpers, which they themselves cannot cure. 12. To travel with Mr. Wesley, if required, once a year, through the Societies in his circuit."

2. How shall we try those who think they are moved by the Holy Ghost, and called of God to preach?—*A.* Enquire 1. Do they know God as a pardoning God? Have they the love of God abiding in them? Do they desire and seek nothing but God? And are they holy in all manner of conversation? 2. Have they gifts as well as grace for the work? Have they (in some tolerable degree) a clear, sound, understanding? Have they a right judgment in the things of God? Have they a just conception of salvation by faith? And has God given them utterance? Do they speak justly, readily, clearly? 3. Have they fruit? Are any truly convinced of sin, and converted to God by their preaching? As long as these three marks concur in any one, we believe he is called of God  
 to

to preach. These we receive as a sufficient proof, that he is moved thereto by the Holy Ghost.

2. But how shall we know whether they concur or no, in any particular person?—*A.* 1. If he is near us, we will talk with him on the preceding heads, and then hear him preach. 2. We will desire him to write down or relate his reasons, why he thinks he is called of God thereto. 3. We will examine those who seem to have been convinced of sin, or converted to God by his preaching. 4. If he is at a distance, we will desire the Assistant to do this: and to enquire what is the judgment of the Society in that place concerning him.

2. What method may we use in receiving a new helper?—*A.* A proper time for doing this is at a Conference, after solemn fasting and prayer. We may then receive him as a probationer, by giving him the minutes of the Conference inscribed thus.

To *A. B.*

"You think it your duty to call sinners to repentance. Make full proof hereof, and we shall be glad to receive you as a fellow labourer.

"Observe, you are not to ramble up and down, but to go where the Assistant directs, and there only.

"Let him then read and carefully weigh what is contained therein, and see whether he can agree to it or not. If he can, let him come to the next Conference, where after examination, fasting and prayer, he may be received into full connexion with us, by giving him the Minutes inscribed thus:

"So long as you freely consent to, and earnestly endeavour to walk by these rules, we shall rejoice to acknowledge you as a fellow labourer."

2. What

2. What can be done to prevent unqualified persons from preaching or exhorting?—*A.* 1. Let none exhort in any of our Societies, without a note of recommendation from the Assistant. 2. Let every exhorter see that this be renewed yearly. 3. Let every Assistant rigorously insist upon this.

The following are the twelve rules of an Helper, which were now agreed upon. These rules every preacher must subscribe on his being admitted into full connexion: Some of them were drawn up by Mr. Wesley before there was any Conference.

“ 1. Be diligent. Never be unemployed a moment. Never be triflingly employed. Never while away time: neither spend any more time at any place than is strictly necessary. 2. Be serious. Let your motto be, Holiness to the Lord. Avoid all lightness, jesting, and foolish talking. 3. Converse sparingly and cautiously with women: particularly with young women. 4. Take no step towards marriage, without first consulting with your Brethren. 5. Believe evil of no one; unless you see it done, take heed how you credit it. Put the best construction on every thing: You know the judge is always supposed to be on the prisoners side. 6. Speak evil of no one: else your word especially, would eat as doth a canker: keep your thoughts within your own breast, till you come to the person concerned. 7. Tell every one what you think wrong in him, and that plainly as soon as may be: else it will fester in your heart. Make all haste to cast the fire out of your bosom. 8. Do not affect the gentleman. You have no more to do with this character, than with that of a dancing master: A Preacher of the Gospel is the servant of all. 9. Be ashamed of  
of



of nothing but sin: not of fetching wood (if time permit) or drawing water: not of cleaning your own shoes, or your neighbours. 10. Be punctual. Do every thing exactly at the time: And in general, do not *mend* our rules, but keep them: not for wrath, but for conscience sake. 11. You have nothing to do, but to save souls. Therefore spend and be spent in this work. And go always, not only to those that want you, but to those that want you most. Observe, It is not your business, to preach so many times, and to take care of this or that Society: but to save as many souls as you can; to bring as many sinners as you possibly can to repentance, and with all your power to build them up in that Holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord. And remember! A Methodist Preacher is to mind every point, great and small, in the Methodist discipline. Therefore you will need all the sense you have: and to have all your wits about you. 12. Act in all things, not according to your own will, but as a son in the Gospel. As such it is your part to employ your time, in the manner which we direct: partly in preaching and visiting from house to house: partly in reading, meditation and prayer. Above all, if you labour with us in our Lord's vineyard, it is needful that you should do that *part* of the work which we advise at those *times* and *places* which we judge most for his glory."

The Conference never saw cause to alter or amend these rules, except in lengthening the time of probation from *one* year to *four*. This was done in the year 1784.

At this time all the travelling Preachers were called *Helpers*, *i. e.* Helpers of Mr. Wesley; some as *Assistants* in every part of his office; and others as *Preachers*: and he considered them with

with himself, as extraordinary messengers, designed by the Lord to provoke others to jealousy. He considered them as *extraordinary*, because in general they were not educated for the office, but were mostly young men intended for trade. They had no thought of Preaching till they knew the Lord; but their labours were powerfully owned of God in the conversion of souls.

The following Questions, with the answers given to them I think it proper to insert, because they shew the views of Mr. Wesley, and of the preachers, and the principles on which they acted.

2. What may we reasonably believe to be God's design in raising up the Preachers called Methodists?—*A.* To reform the nation, particularly the Church, and to spread scriptural holiness through the land.

2. Is it advisable to preach in as many places as we can, without forming Societies?—*A.* By no means. We have made the trial in various places and that for a considerable time; and all the seed has fallen as by the way side. There is scarce any fruit of it remaining.

The following inconveniencies attend it:—

1. Where there is no Society, the Preachers cannot give proper instructions and exhortations to those that are convinced of sin. 2. The people cannot watch over one another in love: nor can believers bear one anothers burdens, nor build up each other in faith and holiness.

2. Where should we endeavour to preach most?—*A.* 1. Where there is the greatest number of quiet and willing hearers. 2. Where there is most fruit.

2. How often should our Helpers preach?—*A.* Not more than twice a day, unless on a Sunday, or some extraordinary occasion.

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2. Is *Field Preaching* then unlawful?—*A.* We conceive not. We do not know that it is contrary to any *Law*, either of God or Man.

2. Have we not used it too sparingly?—*A.* It seems we have. 1. Because our call is, to save that which is lost. Now we cannot expect such to seek us, therefore we should go and seek them. 2. Because we are particularly called, by going into the *High-ways* and *Hedges* (which none else will do) to compel them to come in.—Since that time it has appeared, that in order to render *Field Preaching* agreeable to the Law of the Land, the *ground* also must be licensed according to the act of Toleration.

2. Ought we not diligently to observe in what places God is pleased at any time to pour out his spirit more abundantly?—*A.* We ought, and at that time to send more labourers than usual into that part of the *Harvest*.

2. What is a sufficient call to a new place?—*A.* 1. An invitation from a serious man, fearing God, who has a house to receive us. 2. A probability of doing more good by going thither, than by staying where we are.

2. Do we observe any evil which has lately prevailed among our Societies?—*A.* Many of our members have lately married with unbelievers, even such as were wholly unawakened. And this has been attended with fatal consequences; few of these have gained the unbelieving wife or husband. Generally they have themselves either had an heavy cross for life, or entirely fallen back into the world.

2. What can be done to put a stop to this?—*A.* 1. Let every Preacher take occasion publicly to enforce the Apostles' caution, *Be ye not unequally yoked with unbelievers.*

2. Let



2. Let it be openly declared in every place, that he who acts contrary to this, will be expelled the Society. 3. When any such is expelled, let an exhortation be subjoined, dissuading others from following that bad example. 4. And let all be exhorted, to take no step in so weighty a matter, without first advising with the most serious of their brethren.

2. Ought any woman to marry without the consent of her parents?—*A.* In general, she ought not. Yet there may be an exception. - For if, 1. a woman be under a necessity of marrying: If, 2. Her parents absolutely refuse to let her marry any Christian: then she may, nay, ought to marry without their consent. Yet even then, a Methodist Preacher ought not to marry her.

At this time, and for some years after, it was customary for the Preachers to expel persons from the Society, by mentioning their names in public, and also the crimes they had committed. But it was found that in so doing they laid themselves open to an action, by the party expelled. All they do at present is, to declare in the meeting of the Society, That "*A. B.* is no longer a member of the Society." No evil can follow from this.

The following minutes manifest the labours of the Preachers: and also Mr. Wesley's great desire to see the truest and most cordial friendship among them, as well as a union with respect to their ministerial work.

2. What is the office of an Helper?—*A.* 1. To expound every morning and evening. 2. To meet the united Society, the Bands, the select Society, and the penitents every week. 3. To receive on trial, for the Society and Bands, and to put the disorderly back on trial. 4. To meet the Leaders of the Bands and Classes weekly, and the Stewards, and to overlook their accounts.

What general method of employing our time would you advise us to?—*A.* 1. As often as possible to rise at four. 2. From four to five in the morning, and from five to six in the evening, to meditate, pray, and read, partly the scriptures, with the notes on the New Testament, partly *Kempis* and the Instructions for Children, and partly the closely practical parts of the Christian Library. 3. From six in the morning till twelve, (allowing an hour for breakfast) to read in order, with much prayer, Bishop *Pearson* on the Creed. Mr. *Boehm's* and *Nelson's* Sermons, the remaining parts of the Christian Library, our other tracts and poems, *Paradise Lost*, and Professor *Frank's* works.

2. How may we be more useful in conversation?—*A.* 1. Fix the end of each conversation before you begin. 2. Watch and pray during the time. 3. Spend two or three minutes every hour in earnest prayer. 4. Rarely spend above an hour at a time in conversing with any one.

2. How shall we be assured that no Preacher will ever disappoint a congregation?—*A.* By asking every one. 1. Do you see the great sin and fatal consequences of it? 2. Will you break a limb rather than wilfully break your word therein? 3. If you do, can you blame us, for not employing you any more.

2. Might not the children in every place be formed into a little Society?—*A.* 1. Let the Preachers try by meeting them together and giving them suitable exhortations. 2. By explaining to them in an easy familiar manner the Instructions for children, and the Tokens for children.

2. Would it not be well for every Preacher to visit the sick?—*A.* No time could be employed more profitably, either for them or us: and when  
we

we do so, we should examine them carefully as to the state they are in ; and then instruct, reprove, or exhort accordingly.

2. How may we make the Leaders of the Classes more useful?—*A.* 1. Let each of them be diligently examined, concerning his method of meeting a Class. 2. Let the Leaders converse with all the Preachers, as frequently and as freely as possible. 3. Let each Leader carefully enquire how every soul in his class prospers? Not only how each person observes the outward rules, but how he grows in the knowledge and love of God. 4. Let the Leaders frequently meet each others Classes.

2. How can we further assist those under our care?—*A.* 1. By examining the Society very closely at the general meeting of the Classes. 2. By examining those who are in Band, as to their inward state, and their observance of the rules. 3. By meeting the married men and married women apart: the single men and single women apart. 4. By examining and instructing them at their own houses, at times set apart for that purpose.

2. How shall we prevent improper persons from insinuating themselves into the Society?

—*A.* 1. Give Tickets to none till they are recommended by a Leader, with whom they have met three months on trial. 2. Give notes to none but those who are recommended by a Leader, with whom they have met three or four times. 3. Make them shew their Tickets when coming into the Society. 4. Admit strangers with caution, and but seldom to the meeting of the Society.

2. What can be done in order to a closer union of our helpers?—*A.* 1. Let them be deeply convinced of the want there is of it at present,



and the absolute necessity of it. 2. Let them pray for an earnest desire of union. 3. Let them speak freely to each other. 4. When they meet let them never part without prayer. 5. Let them beware how they despise each others gifts. 6. Let them never speak slightly of each other in any kind. 7. Let them defend one anothers character in every thing to the utmost of their power, and, 8. Let them labour in honour each to prefer the other before himself.

2. How shall we avoid popularity? We mean such esteem or love from the people, as is not for the glory of God.—*A.* 1. Earnestly pray for a piercing sense of the danger, and the sinfulness of it. 2. Take care how you ingratiate yourself with any people by slackness of discipline. 3. Or by any method which another Preacher cannot follow. 4. Warn the people among whom you are most of esteeming or loving you too much. 5. Converse sparingly with those who are particularly fond of you. 6. Use all the means of grace whether instituted or prudential.

The Instituted are, 1. Prayer, private, family, public: consisting of Deprecation, Petition, Intercession, Thanksgiving. 2. Searching the Scriptures, by reading, hearing, and meditating on them. 3. Receiving the Lord's supper at every opportunity. 4. Fasting and abstinence at least one day in every week. 5. Christian Conference.

The Prudential are those which are agreeable to the rules of Christian Prudence, and may be used as private Christians, as Methodists, as Preachers, or as Assistants. 1. As private Christians. What particular rules have you for avoiding evil? doing good? growing in grace? What arts of holy living? and improving time? 2. As Methodists. Do you keep the rules of the Society, and of the Bands? The morning and evening hour

hour of retirement? *i. e.* six in the morning, and five o'clock in the afternoon. 3. As Preachers. Do you preach morning and evening? Do you meet every Society weekly? Also the Leaders, and Bands if any? 4. As Assistants. Do you attend to the twelve rules of an Assistant? Particularly those which relate to the other Preachers, the Bands, and the books? Mr. Wesley observes, "These means may be used without fruit. But there are some means which cannot; namely, watching, denying ourselves, taking up our cross, and exercise of the presence of God."

A set of men acting on these principles, and laying themselves out in this manner, could not fail of being useful. For the Redeemer hath said, "To him that hath shall be given, (*i. e.* to him that improveth what he hath, more shall be given,) and he shall have abundance."

This is the first time we read of the Preachers having any thing to do with the books. In every circuit now the Superintendant manages the book concerns, by which means the body is increased and edified.

At this conference also the account was drawn up of the design and state of Kingswood School, to be read by every Assistant at Midsummer, when making the collection for it. The *Deed of Trust* also, for the settlement of the Preaching houses, which Mr. Wesley got drawn up by three eminent Counsel, was published and recommended to the Societies.

The yearly subscription also was earnestly recommended to all the Societies. It had been made in a few of them before this time, but now an account of its necessity was published. It was made in the Classes: and every one was exhorted to contribute something, in order to defray the expences occasioned, 1. By building preaching

preaching houses. 2. By sending out Preachers who were able and willing to travel, but who could not provide themselves with necessaries. 3. To support the Preachers while labouring in the poor circuits in England, Scotland, Wales, and Ireland. 4. To enable them to take the benefit of the *Law* when persecuted by wicked and unreasonable men.—The expences of building are now taken off this Collection, and yet it falls short every year of defraying the necessary expences, even with the addition of all the profits of the Books.

For the first time, the number of the circuits were taken this year. There were then thirty-one circuits in the three kingdoms.

*In England Twenty.*

1 London.	11 Whitehaven.
2 Sussex.	12 Lincolnshire.
3 Norwich.	13 Sheffield.
4 Bedford.	14 Leeds.
5 Wiltshire.	15 Birstall.
6 Bristol.	16 Haworth.
7 Devonshire.	17 York.
8 Cornwall.	18 Yarm.
9 Staffordshire.	19 The Dales.
10 Chester.	20 Newcastle.

*In Scotland Two.*

- 1 Edinburgh.
- 2 Aberdeen.

*In Wales Two.*

- 1 Pembrokeshire.
- 2 Brecknockshire.

*In Ireland Seven.*

- |              |              |
|--------------|--------------|
| 1 Dublin.    | 5 Castlebar. |
| 2 Waterford. | 6 Athlone.   |
| 3 Cork.      | 7 The North. |
| 4 Limerick.  |              |

*In all Thirty One.*

Some



Some of the Preachers at this time appeared to be almost worn out, and unable to travel; and having nothing to subsist on, it led them to institute what they called, *The Preachers Fund*. It is thus noted.

2. How may provision be made for old worn-out Preachers?—*A.* As to their employment, they may be supernumerary Preachers, in those circuits wherein there is most need. As to their subsistence, 1. Let every Travelling Preacher contribute ten shillings yearly at the Conference. 2. Let this be lodged in the hands of three Stewards, approved of by the majority of the Preachers. 3. Out of this, let what is needful be allowed yearly. 1. For the old and sickly Preachers, and their families, (if they have any.) 2. For the widows and children of those that are dead.

Two things are observable in this institution. 1. The Travelling Preachers *only* contributed then to the relief of their worn out Brethren. 2. None were to be relieved but those who were in need. The Brethren in general now help to support this great Charity.

Several other particulars were considered at this Conference, and recommended to the brethren, which in this History I think it right to mention, though seemingly of small importance. The following directions were given to the Preachers, respecting the *method, manner, and subject* of their preaching:—

I. The method. They were, 1. To invite. 2. To convince. 3. To offer *Christ*. 4. To build up: and to do this in some measure in every sermon.

II. The manner. 1. To begin and end precisely at the time. 2. To suit their subject to their audience, and to choose the plainest texts they could.

could. 3. To be serious, weighty, and solemn in their whole deportment before the congregation; and to tell each other if they observed a deviation from these rules.

III. The subject.—1. To preach Christ in all his offices, and to declare his Law as well as his Gospel to believers and unbelievers. 2. To insist upon practical religion in general; and upon relative duties in particular. 3. To preach against Sabbath-breaking, dram-drinking, evil speaking, unprofitable conversation, lightness, gaiety, or expensiveness of Apparel, and contracting debts without sufficient care to discharge them.

In a word, to preach against all kinds of vice, and to call the people to general repentance; in order to prevent a general visitation. For national sins call aloud for national judgments. This last advice led to the following minute.

2. Should we talk of Persecution before it comes?—A. To talk or think before of any particular persecution, only weakens our hands. And how long the general persecution may be deferred God only knows.—From this it appears the Conference at this time expected a general persecution. Blessed be God it is yet delayed!

The Preachers were earnestly exhorted to attend to, and recommend to others, the five o'clock hour in the afternoon for prayer, for themselves and the work of God. Many have conscientiously attended to it.

It appears from these minutes, as well as from the rules, that Mr. Wesley wished to see the Methodists a plain people as to dress. He did not wish to have them singular as the Quakers, but plain, agreeably to the Scriptures. He now advised the Preachers not to give Band Tickets to any who dressed in the fashion, not even to married women,

women, who sometimes pleaded, that they dressed in the fashion to please their husbands.

Mr. Wesley's care of the Preachers extended to the smallest things, even to advise what they should take after preaching, Namely, "Lemonade, Candied orange-peel, or a little soft warm ale." But he observes, "Egg and wine is downright poison; so are late suppers."

His care for the Married Preachers is manifest in the following Minute.

2. How may the married Preachers be provided for?—*A.* 1. Let the Assistant inquire at the quarterly meeting, what each Preachers Wife will want for the ensuing quarter. 2. Let this be supplied first of all, out of the common stock.

1764. In the beginning of this year, Mr. Erskine re-published in Scotland, Mr. Hervey's Eleven Letters, and spread them with all his might. They had in some degree the effect he desired. They prejudiced the Scotch against the Methodist doctrine, and hindered the prosperity of the work. These letters did no harm in England. Mr. Wesley and Mr. Sellon wrote masterly answers to them. It was afterwards known, that a Mr. Cudworth, a violent Antinomian, had written the most virulent passages in these letters.

April 19, 1764, Mr. Wesley wrote his famous Catholic circular letter to all the converted Clergy (that he knew) in England; who preached, 1. The doctrine of original sin. 2. Justification by faith. 3. Holiness of heart and life. He invited them to unite with him, and with each other, in order to spread holiness through the nation. (The letter may be seen in his Life by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, page 316.) Out of fifty or sixty persons which he wrote to, only three vouchsafed him an answer, one of whom was that blessed man of God, the  
Rev.



Rev. Vincent Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham.\* Mr. Wesley had as good an opportunity of knowing the converted Clergy, and was as capable of judging concerning them, as any man in England. Since that time their number has considerably increased.

April 22, in this year, John Manners, one of the Preachers, died in York. He was singularly useful in the revival which began in the year 1760, and particularly in the year 1762, in the city of Dublin. He was clearly sensible to the last, as well as solidly happy in God. Saying, "The way is quite clear: my heart is at liberty." The following is the character, Mr. Wesley gave of him. "A plain man, of middling sense, and not eloquent, but rather rude in speech: one who had never before been remarkably useful, but seemed to be raised up for this single work. And as soon as it was done, he fell into a consumption, languished a while and died."

August 16, 1764, The twenty-first Conference was held in Bristol. The Minutes were not printed. Mr. Wesley observes concerning it, "The great point I now laboured for was, a good understanding with all our brethren of the Clergy, who are heartily engaged in propagating Vital Religion." He had long laboured for this; but even those who loved and preached the Gospel, had not, in general, his enlarged and liberal mind. Mr. Walker of Truro, who attended some of the first Conferences, had proposed, in the year 1757, that Mr. Wesley should give up the Societies which were under his care, to the exclusive superintendence

\* His life is published in the Arminian Magazine, for January 1799.

superintendence of those Ministers, in every place, who were pious, and who also preached the Gospel; and instanced a Mr. Vowler, a Parish Minister, in Cornwall, to whom Mr. Wesley ought, as Mr. Walker observes, *in justice*, to resign the Societies in his parish. Mr. Wesley replied,\* That Mr. Vowler might be a gracious person, and also preach the Gospel, yet there were several reasons why he should hesitate to give up the people to him. “ I do not know,” he observes, “ 1. That every one who preaches the Truth, has wisdom or experience to govern a Flock. 2. I do not know whether he would or could give that Flock all the advantages for holiness which they now enjoy: and to leave them to him before I was assured of this, would be neither *justice* nor *mercy*. 3. Unless *they* were also assured of this, they could not in conscience give themselves up to him; and I have neither *right* nor *power* to dispose of them contrary to their own conscience.—I extend this to every Gospel Minister in England. Before I could with a clear conscience leave a Methodist Society to such a one, all these considerations must come in.”

But these just and liberal sentiments had not all that weight which they ought to have had with these good men. They retained their former sentiments; and Mr. Charles Wesley, who ceased being an Itinerant in the year 1757, and had settled at Bristol, fully adopted their views. Mr. Wesley's circular letter now gave them some hope, that they might prevail, and twelve Clergymen accordingly attended this Conference. The proposal formerly made by Mr.

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Walker

\* See the letter entire, in Mr. Wesley's life, by Dr. Coke, and Mr. Moore, page 312.

Walker was now renewed in form, and supported by Mr. Charles Wesley, who declared, that if he were a parish Minister, *the Preachers should not preach in his parish!* Mr. John Wesley, however, whose constant persevering mind nothing but Holy Scripture or right reason could move, remained firmly fixed in those sentiments which he had expressed in his circular letter, and in that to Mr. Walker. The Preachers unanimously agreed with him; and as these Clergyman would not unite with him except upon their own terms, he was obliged to abandon the idea altogether.

There were at this time thirty-nine Circuits in Great Britain and Ireland; and ninety-six Preachers labouring on them.\* From this period the Minutes of the Conferences were *annually* published; and it appears that, (except on rare occasions) only those attended them who were Itinerants, and laboured in union with each other, under the superintendence of Mr. Wesley. I shall insert in this History every thing contained in these Minutes, which is either new or important.

\* For their Names, &c. see the Appendix. No. I.



## CHAPTER THE FIFTH.

*From the Conference in 1765, to the Conference in 1771.*

**AUGUST** the 20th, 1765, The twenty-second Conference was held in *Manchester*.\* The following particulars appear in the Minutes.

2. How late may the Evening-preaching begin? And how long should a Love Feast last?—

*A.* Not later than seven o'clock, except in harvest time at half after seven. And a Love Feast should last but an hour and a half. Every one should be at home by nine o'clock.

2. Are all the Preachers merciful to their beasts?—*A.* Perhaps not. Every one ought, 1. Never to ride hard: 2. To see with his own eyes his horse rubbed, fed and bedded.

2. What can be done to prevent our people needlessly removing from one Society to another?

—*A.* 1. Let none remove without the advice of the Assistant; 2. Let none be received into another Society without a certificate from the Assistant, in these words, "*A. B.* the bearer is now a member of our Society in——I believe he has a sufficient cause to remove from thence." 3.

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\* This was the first Conference that was held in that place, and it did not again assemble there till the year 1787. From that time it has been held in that town every fourth year, as at London, Bristol, and Leeds.

Let notice be immediately given of this in every Society. 4. Let there be one Ticket every where, and the form sent directly from London, and so in every succeeding quarter.

Q. Are our people good œconomists?—A. In public and private, enlarge on œconomy as a branch of religion.

Q. Are they guarded in their words?—A. Not sufficiently. Warn them against little oaths, as upon my *life*, my *faith*, my *honour*. And against compliments. Let them use no *unmeaning* words.

Q. Should we recommend calling each other *Brother* and *Sister*?—A. It may be done tenderly and prudently.

Q. Do they not in general *talk* too much, and read too little?—A. They do. Let them retrench but half the time they spend in talking, and they will have time enough to read. Speak of this every where. Reprove them publicly and privately for reading less useful books. Do not talk too much yourself. If you stay above an hour at any place take out a book and read.

Q. Should the men and women sit apart in every Chapel?—A. By all means. Every Preacher should look to this. At the next Conference it was found this was impracticable, therefore the following exception was allowed. “In those galleries where they have been accustomed to sit together, they may do so still. But let them sit apart every where below, and in all newly erected galleries.”

Q. Are the houses that are already built, safe?—A. Not all. Some of them are not regularly settled yet. Several trustees for others are dead. Therefore let a person be sent through England to

survey the deeds, and supply the Trustees wanting." So careful was Mr. Wesley to secure the preaching-houses, that they might continue to be used for the purposes for which they were built.

2. Have the people left off snuff, and drams?

*A.* Not all. Many are absolutely enslaved to both still. In order to redress this great evil,  
1. Speak to any who takes snuff in sermon time.  
2. Let no Preacher touch it on any account.  
3. Shew the Societies the evil of it. 4. Let no Preacher drink a dram, on any pretence. - 5. Strongly dissuade our people from it. Answer their pretences; particularly those, of curing the cholic, and helping the digestion.

The following advices were given to the Preachers:—1. Use Intercession on Friday, and recommend fasting both by precept and example. (From this time in many of the large Societies, the hour from twelve to one o'clock is spent in wrestling with God for ourselves; the Societies in general; the success of the Gospel every where; and for the prosperity of our King and Country.) 2. Encourage all in the Bands to speak freely. This advice gave rise to the following minute.

2. But how can we encourage the women in the Bands to speak, since *it is a shame for a woman to speak in the Church?* 1 Cor. xiv. 35.—

*A.* I deny, 1. that *speaking* in that passage means any other than speaking as a *public* teacher. This *St. Paul* suffered not, because it implied *usurping authority over the man*, 1 Tim. ii. 12. Whereas *no authority* either over man or woman is usurped by the speaking now in question, I deny, 2. That *the church* in that text means any other than the great congregation.



Women have at different times and places acted as Leaders, (mostly as Leaders of Classes wherein there were no men) and generally they have been very useful in that office. A very few women have also at different times acted as public Preachers. A letter from Mr. Wesley to one of these (Miss Bosanquet, the present Mrs. Fletcher, of Madely,) shews that he thought it might be suffered in some cases.

*Londonderry, June 13, 1771.*

“MY DEAR SISTER,

“I think the strength of the cause rests there, in your having an extraordinary call. So I am persuaded has every one of our Lay Preachers: otherwise, I could not countenance their preaching at all. It is plain to me that the whole work of God termed Methodism, is an extraordinary dispensation of his Providence. Therefore, I do not wonder, if several things occur therein which do not fall under ordinary rules of discipline. St. Paul’s ordinary rule was “I permit not a woman to speak in the congregation,” yet in extraordinary cases, he made a few exceptions, at Corinth in particular. I am, my Dear Sister, your affectionate Brother.

J. WESLEY.”

Some persons, it is to be feared, have acted in this way whose call was very disputable. Lest such should be encouraged by this letter, let it be remembered, that it was written to a very eminent woman, who never abused the extraordinary call which she believed she had received, to any unworthy purpose.

Oct.

Oct. 14, 1765, Mr. *Alexander Coats* died at Newcastle-upon-Tyne. He was at that time the oldest preacher in the connexion. He came from Scotland, and engaged in the work of the Lord at a very early period. His ministerial abilities were very extraordinary, quite out of the common way, which rendered him exceedingly popular. His conversation out of the pulpit, was wonderfully pleasant, yet exceedingly instructive. He always called *Christ*, his *Master*. A few days before his death, he was sorely tempted by the enemy; but near the close of life, he had perfect peace. His faith was clear, and he found Christ precious, his portion, and his eternal all. Being asked a little before he died, if he had *followed cunningly-devised fables*? He answered, "No, no, no." He was then asked, if he saw land? He said, "Yes, I do." After waiting a few moments at anchor, he put into the quiet harbour.

August 12, 1766, The twenty-third Conference was held in Leeds. Mr. Wesley observes concerning it, A happier one we never had, nor a more profitable one. It was both begun and ended in love, and with a solemn sense of the presence of God. The Initials of those who ceased to travel were then first published in the following manner.

Q. Who are laid aside this year?—A. I. B. and J. M.

The connexion was at this time disturbed respecting the question of Separation from the national Church. Those who wished it said, "The Methodists were already Dissenters." This gave rise to the following minute.

Q. Are

2. Are the Methodists Dissenters?—*A.* No. We are irregular, 1. By calling sinners to repentance in all places of God's dominion. 2. By using extemporaneous prayer. 3. By uniting together in a religious Society. Yet we are not *Dissenters* in the only sense which our *Law* acknowledges: namely, *Persons who believe it sinful to attend the service of the Church*: for we attend it at all opportunities.

Observe, These things were done without authority from a Bishop, and (to avoid legal penalties,) under cover of the Toleration act: yet the Methodists in general had no scruple of conscience in attending the service of the Church. They have always had these views of the subject, and have the same even to this day; nor are any among them to this hour restrained from the most exact attendance on all the ordinances of the Church: and in general, these allow equal liberty to those of contrary sentiments.

Mr. Wesley at this Conference, advised the Assistants, 1. To insist on cleanliness and decency every where. 2. To give an account to their successors of the state of things in their several circuits. 3. So to order the preaching in each circuit, that no Preacher should be *obliged* to miss the Church, but to go there at least two Sundays in a month.

From the Minutes of this Conference it also appears, that some among the Preachers, as well as the people, thought Mr. Wesley's power too great, and wished to curtail it. This led him to consider the steps by which he believed God had given him that authority. On this subject he thus speaks with his usual plainness.

“ Count

“ Count Zinzendorf loved to keep all things close : I love to do all things openly. I will therefore tell you all I know of the matter, taking it from the very beginning.

1. In November 1739, two or three persons who desired to flee from the wrath to come, and then a few more, came to me in *London*, and desired me to advise, and pray with them. I said, “ If you will meet me on Thursday night, I will help you as well as I can.” More and more then desired to meet with them, till they were increased to many hundreds. The case was afterwards the same at *Bristol*, *Kingswood*, *Newcastle*, and many other parts of England and Ireland. It may be observed, the desire was on *their* part, not *mine*. My desire was to live and die in retirement. But I did not see, that I could refuse them my help, and be guiltless before God.

Here commenced my *Power* : namely, a power to appoint *when* and *where*, and *how* they should meet ; and to remove those whose lives shewed that they had not a desire to flee from the wrath to come. And this power remained the same, whether the people meeting together were twelve, or twelve hundred, or twelve thousand.

2. In a few days some of them said, “ Sir, you want money to pay for the lease of the Foundry : and likewise a large sum of money to put it in repair.” On this consideration I suffered them to subscribe. And when the Society met, I asked, “ Who will take the trouble of receiving this money, and paying it where it is needful?” One said, “ I will do it, and keep the account for you.” So here was the first *Steward*. Afterwards I desired one or two more to help me as Stewards, and in process of time a greater number.

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Let it be remarked, it was I myself, not the people, who chose these Stewards, and appointed to each the distinct work, wherein he was to help me, as long as I desired. And herein I began to exercise another sort of *Power*, namely, that of *appointing* and *removing* Stewards.

3. After a time, a young man named *Thomas Maxfield*, came and desired to help me as a son in the Gospel. Soon after came a second, then a third. These severally desired to serve me as sons, and to labour *when* and *where* I should direct. Observe, These likewise desired *me*, not I them. But I durst not refuse their assistance. And here commenced my *power*, to appoint each of these, *when* and *where*, and *how*, to labour: *i. e.* while he chose to continue with me. For each had a power to go away when he pleased: as I had also, to go away from them, or any of them, if I saw sufficient cause. The case continued the same, when the number of Preachers increased. I had just the same power still, to appoint *when* and *where*, and *how*, each should help me, and to tell any (if I saw cause) "I do not desire your help any longer."

4. In 1744, I wrote to several Clergymen, and to all who then served me as sons in the Gospel, desiring them to meet me in *London*, and to give me their advice concerning the best method of carrying on the work of God. And when their number increased, so that it was not convenient to invite them all, for several years I wrote to those with whom I desired to confer, and they only met me at *London*, or elsewhere: till at length I gave a general permission. Observe, I myself sent for these of my own free choice. And I sent

I sent for them to *advise*, not *govern* me. Neither did I at any time divest myself of any part of the power above described, which the Providence of God had cast upon me, without any design or choice of mine. And as it was merely in obedience to the providence of God, and for the good of the people, that I at first accepted this power, so it is on the same consideration, not for profit, honour, or pleasure, that I use it at this day."—I believe it is fully acknowledged that Mr. Wesley's *resolution* at that time, proved a blessing to the connexion, and has been followed by the happiest effects.

A great deal that was published in the year 1763, was re-printed in these minutes, with a view of impressing it more on the minds of the Preachers. It is unnecessary to repeat it.

August 18, 1767, The Twenty-fourth Conference was held in London. Mr. Wesley's account of it is, "I met in Conference with our Assistants, and a select number of the Preachers. To these were added, Mr. *Whitfield*, *Howell Harris*: and many Stewards, and Local Preachers, *on the last two days*. Love and harmony reigned from the beginning to the end. But we have all need of more love and holiness: and in order thereto of crying continually, "Lord increase our faith," the names of those who desisted from travelling, were, for the first time, printed in the minutes of this Conference. They were, James Stephens, William Whitwell, and James Kershaw. Several directions were also given to enforce the necessity of the Yearly Subscription, Kingswood Collection, and the Preacher's Fund. The numbers

in

in the several circuits were now also for the first time published. There were,

In England,	25	} Circuits.	75	} Preachers.	22410	} Mem- bers.
In Ireland,	9		19		2801	
In Scotland,	5		7		468	
In Wales,	1		3		232	
<hr/>			<hr/>		<hr/>	
Total.	40	Circuits.	104	Preachers.	25911	Member

The following particulars are all that can be considered as new.

2. What is the safest way of leaving a legacy for the use of our Funds?—*A.* To leave it absolutely to a person they can confide in: suppose to Mr. Wesley.

2. The *Wednesbury* Trustees are afraid, lest the Conference should impose on them one Preacher for many years. May not this be guarded against?—*A.* Yes. By inserting in the deed, *Provided that the same Preacher shall not be sent, ordinarily above one, never above two years together.* (Three years are now the utmost limit of the Appointments.)

2. How may the books be spread more?—*A.* Let every Assistant give them away prudently; and beg money of the rich to buy books for the poor.

2. What can be done to revive the work?—*A.* 1. Let there be a general Fast once a quarter. 2. Let any Assistant appoint an occasional Fast in his circuit. 3. Let every Preacher strongly insist upon practical religion, and relative duties: but in such a manner, as to keep Christ continually in view.

Prayer and fasting have always been remarkably owned of God. The regular appointed *Fasts* are, the

the first Friday *after* the 29th of September, the first of January, the 25th of March, and the 24th of June.

Meetings for prayer have not been confined to the Fast days, but are used weekly, and are productive of great good.

2. How shall we put a stop to smuggling?—

*A.* 1. Speak tenderly and frequently of it in every Society near the coasts. 2. Carefully disperse the “Word to a smuggler”. 3. Expell all those who will not leave it off. 4. Silence every Local Preacher who defends it.

2. How may we prevent bribery at the ensuing Election for Members of Parliament?—*A.*

1. Largely shew the wickedness of thus selling our country in every Society. 2. Do the same thing in private conversation. 3. Read every where the “Word to a Freeholder,” and disperse it as it were with both hands. But observe, A Voter may suffer his *expences* to be borne, and not incur any blame.

1768. In the month of April, in this year, a remarkable work of God began among the children at *Kingswood* School. There was a revival of it in September 1770; and another in September 1773. These revivals gave Mr. Wesley great satisfaction. He had a constant and lively concern for young people.

August 16, 1768, The twenty-fifth Conference was held in Bristol. From Mr. Wesley's account, it appears there was at that time a great want of Preachers. His words are, “O What can we do for more labourers? We can only cry to the *Lord of the harvest.*”



At this Conference the following important matter was discussed :

2. Shall Itinerant Preachers follow trades ?—

A. This is an important question. And as it is the first time it has come before us, it will be necessary to consider it thoroughly. The question is not whether they may occasionally work with their hands, as St. Paul did: but whether it be proper for them to keep shops and follow merchandize. The plea that was urged for this was, 1. Necessity. 2. Doing more good. As to the first, Mr. Wesley promised to supply all their necessities. As to the second plea, Doing more good. It was enquired, Is it not doing evil that good may come? Is not the thing in question both evil in itself, (for us) and evil in its consequences? 1. Is it not with regard to Travelling Preachers evil in itself? Is it well consistent with that Scripture, *2 Tim. ii. 4. No man that warreth (i. e. takes on him the profession of a soldier, as we eminently do) entangleth himself with the affairs of this life*, plainly referring to the Roman Law, which absolutely forbid any soldier to follow any other profession. Is it well consistent with that word. “*Give attendance to reading, to exhortation, to teaching : meditate on these things, give thyself wholly to them*, *1 Tim. iv. 13—15.* Can we be said to give ourselves wholly to these things, if we follow another profession? Does not our Church, in her office of ordination, require every minister to do this? If they do it not, the more shame for them. We above all should mind it, because every Travelling Preacher solemnly professes to have nothing else to do, and receives his little allowance for this very end. 2. Is it not evil in its consequences? Have not some ill consequences appeared already? And is there not the greatest reason

reason to apprehend that still worse will follow? We are enjoined to *give no offence either to Jew or Gentile, or to the Church of God.* But this has already offended, not only many of the world, but many of our own Brethren. Many of the Preachers have been much grieved, yea, and those most alive to God. For if one Preacher follows trade, so may twenty: so may every one. And if any of them trade a little, why not ever so much, who can say how far he should go? Therefore we advise the Brethren who have been concerned therein, to give up all and attend to the one business. And we doubt not but God will recompence them an hundred-fold, even in this world, as well as in the world to come. It is true, this cannot be done on a sudden. But it may between this and the next Conference.

At the Conference in the year 1770, It was agreed, "That no Preacher who would not relinquish his trade of buying and selling cloath or hardware, &c. or making and vending Pills, Drops, Balsams, or medicines of any kind, should be considered as a Travelling Preacher any longer." From this time the evil complained of was removed.

The work of God seemed to be then at a stand in the Circuits. This led to the following enquiry.

2. What can be done to revive and enlarge the work of God?—*A.* 1. Spread our books more, carry them round the circuit with you, and recommend them to the congregation. 2. Let there be more Field-preaching. 3. Let the preaching at five in the morning be constantly kept up. 4. Put the believers into *Bands* wherever you can. 5. Change the Stewards annually. 6. Beware of Formality in singing; guard against

those complex tunes which it is impossible to sing with devotion. 7. Attend to the Quarterly Fasts. 8. Preach Christian-perfection, as a gradual and instantaneous blessing, and press it upon all believers as their privilege.

That we may all speak the same thing, I ask, says Mr. Wesley, once for all, Shall we defend this *perfection* or give it up? You all agree to defend it, meaning thereby, as we did from the beginning, Salvation from all sin by the love of God and our Neighbour filling the heart. The *Papists* say, "This cannot be attained until we have been a sufficient time in Purgatory." The *Dissenters* say, "Nay, it will be attained as soon as the soul and body part." The *old Methodists* said, "It may be attained before we die: a moment after is too late." Is it so or not? You are all agreed, we may be saved from all sin *before death*. The *substance* then is settled. But as to the *circumstance*. Is the change *instantaneous* or *gradual*? It is both the one and the other. From the moment we are justified, there may be a *gradual sanctification*, or a growing in grace, a daily advance in the knowledge and love of God. And if sin cease before death, there must in the nature of the thing be an instantaneous change. There must be a last moment wherein it does exist, and a first moment wherein it does not. But should we in preaching insist on both the one and the other? Certainly we must insist on the gradual change: and that earnestly and continually. And are there not reasons why we should insist on the *Instantaneous* also? If there be such a blessed change before death, should we not encourage all believers to expect it? And the rather because constant experience shews, the more earnestly they expect





brethren at New York, (who have built a Preaching-house,) to come over and help them.

2. Who is willing to go?—A. Two of our Preachers, *Richard Boardman*, and *Joseph Pillmoor*, willingly offered themselves for this service: by whom we determined to send them fifty pounds as a token of our brotherly love, and twenty pounds we gave to our brethren for their passage.

The following account of the rise of Methodism, was given by the Methodist Conference in America, in the year 1786.

“ During the space of thirty years past, *i. e.* from the year 1756, certain persons, members of the Societies, emigrated from England and Ireland, and settled in various parts of this Country. About twenty years ago, 1766, *Philip Embury*, a Local Preacher from Ireland, began to Preach in the city of New York, and formed a Society of his own countrymen and the citizens. About the same time, 1766, *Robert Strawbridge*, a Local Preacher from Ireland, settled in Frederic County, in the state of Maryland, and preaching there, formed some Societies. A little after, Mr. Webb, at that time a lieutenant in the army, preached at New York and Philadelphia with great success. He with the assistance of his friends, erected a chapel in New York, which was the first belonging to the Methodist Society in America.

“ In the year 1769, *Richard Boardman* and *Joseph Pillmoor*, came to New York; they were the first regular Methodist Preachers on the Continent. In the year 1771, *Francis Asbury* and *Richard Wright*, of the same order, went over. In the year 1773, *Thomas Rankin* and *George Shadford*,

Shadford, also went over. In July 1773, the first Conference was held in America, at Philadelphia. Mr. Rankin presided at it. There were about one thousand Members in the different Societies, six or seven of whom were Travelling Preachers. In May 1777, there were forty Preachers in the different Circuits, and seven thousand Members, besides many hundreds of Negroes, who were convinced of sin, and many of them happy in the love of God. From the year 1777, till after the peace in 1783, there was no regular account from America”.

Mr. Asbury was admitted upon trial as a Travelling Preacher, at the London Conference in 1767. He has been, and at present is, the most laborious and useful man ever sent by Mr. Wesley to America. He now (1799) presides as Bishop over all the Methodists in the United States, a tract of country about 1300 miles in length, and 500 in breadth. This honour has been conferred upon him because of his steadiness, zeal and usefulness. There are now two hundred and fifty Itinerant Preachers employed in the United States, and sixty thousand Members in the Societies.

After the Societies began to increase, there was nothing Mr. Wesley had so much at heart as that the Preachers and people should remain united after his death. At this Conference he read the following paper.

“ *My Dear Brethren,*

“ 1. It has long been my desire, that all those *Ministers* of our Church, who believe and preach Salvation by Faith, might cordially agree among themselves, and not hinder but help one another.  
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After occasionally pressing this in private conversation, wherever I had opportunity, I wrote down my thoughts upon the head, and sent them to each in a letter. Out of fifty or sixty to whom I wrote, only three vouchsafed me an answer. So I gave this up: I can do no more. They are a rope of sand: and such they will continue.

“ 2. But it is otherwise with the Travelling Preachers in our connexion: You are at present one body. You act in concert with each other, and by united councils. And now is the time to consider what can be done, in order to continue this union? Indeed, as long as I live, there will be no great difficulty: I am, under God, a centre of union to all our Travelling, as well as Local Preachers. They all know me and my communication. They all love me for my work's sake; and therefore, were it only out of regard to me, they will continue connected with each other. But by what means may this connexion be preserved when God removes me from you?

“ 3. I take it for granted, it cannot be preserved by any means, between those who have not a single eye. Those who aim at any thing but the glory of God and the salvation of men; who desire, or seek any earthly thing, whether honour, profit, or ease, will not, cannot continue in the connexion, it will not answer their design. Some, perhaps, will procure preferment in the Church. Others will turn Independants, and get separate congregations, like *John Edwards* and *Charles Skelton*. Lay your accounts for this, and be not surprised if some you do not suspect be of this number.

“ 4. But what Method can be taken to preserve a firm union between those who chuse to remain together

together? Perhaps you might take some such steps as these: On notice of my death, let all the Preachers in England and Ireland repair to London within six weeks. Let them seek God by solemn fasting and prayer. Let them draw up articles of agreement, to be signed by those who chuse to act in concert. Let those be dismissed who do not chuse it, in the most friendly manner possible. Let the remainder chuse by votes, a committee of three, five, or seven, each of whom is to be *Moderator* in his turn. Let the committee do what I do now. Propose Preachers to be tried, admitted, or excluded. Fix the place of each Preacher for the ensuing year, and the time of the next Conference.

“ 5. Can any thing be done now in order to lay a foundation for this future union? Would it not be well for any that are willing, to sign some articles of agreement before God calls me hence? Suppose something like these.”

“ We whose names are under-written, being thoroughly convinced of the necessity of a close union between those whom God is pleased to use as instruments in this glorious work, in order to preserve this union between ourselves, are resolved, God being our helper,

“ I. To devote ourselves entirely to God; denying ourselves, taking up our cross daily, steadily aiming at one thing, to save our own souls, and them that hear us.

“ II. To preach the old Methodist doctrines, and no other, contained in the minutes of the Conference.

“ III. To observe and enforce the whole Methodist discipline, laid down in the minutes.”

Having left these propositions with the Preachers, that they might consider them maturely, he brought



brought them forward at the Conferences in 1773, 1774, and 1775; at each of which, all the Preachers present signed them. At the first of these Conferences there were forty-eight Preachers present. At the second twenty five; and at the third twenty-eight. These articles of union were signed upon the whole, by one hundred and one Preachers.

From the Minutes of this Conference it appears, that the married Preachers were, before this time, sent only to the circuits which could maintain them. This was productive of many inconveniencies, as there were but very few circuits which could do this. To remedy this evil, every circuit was required to do a little towards paying the stipend of the Preacher's wives; so that a married Preacher might be sent into any circuit whether it could wholly provide for his family or not.

August 7th, 1770, The Twenty-seventh Conference was held in London. At this time the names of the Preacher's wives that needed support were published, and the circuits which were to provide for them were also mentioned. There were then forty-three to be provided for by the circuits in general. The children were to be supported by the circuits on which their parents laboured. It was now agreed, that a Preacher should receive Twelve Pounds a year for his wife, and Four Pounds a year for each of his children, to be paid quarterly: the boys till they were eight years of age, fit to go to Kingswood School; the girls till they were fourteen, fit to go to business.

The failure of some of the Members who  
were

were men of business, occasioned the following Minute.

2. What shall we do to prevent scandal when any of our Members becomes a bankrupt?—*A.* In this case, let two of the principal Members of the Society be deputed to examine his accounts, and if he have not kept fair accounts, or been concerned in that base practice, of raising money by coining Notes, (commonly called the bill trade,) let him be immediately expelled the Society.

To raise a bulwark against *Antinomianism*, the following Propositions, respecting Doctrine, were now agreed to :

Take heed to your Doctrine. We said, in 1744, “ We have lea<sup>r</sup>ned too much to wards Calvinism,” Wherein? 1. “ With regard to *Man’s Faithfulness*. Our Lord himself taught us to use the expression. And we ought never to be ashamed of it. We ought steadily to assert, on his authority, that if a man is not *faithful in the unrighteous mammon*, God will not give him the true riches. 2. “ With regard to *working for life*. This also our Lord has expressly commanded us. *Labour, (Ergazesthe)* literally, *work for the meat that endureth to everlasting life*. And in fact every believer, till he comes to glory, works *for* as well *from* life. 3. We have received it as a maxim, that, “ A man is to do nothing, in order to Justification:” nothing can be more false. Whoever desires to find favour with God should *cease from evil and learn to do well*. So God himself teaches by the Prophet *Isaiah*. Whoever repents should do *works meet for repentance*. And if this is not *in order* to find favour, what does he do them for?”

Review the whole affair. 1. Who of us is now accepted of God? He that now believes in Christ,  
with

with a loving and obedient heart. 2. But who among those that never heard of Christ? He that feareth God and worketh righteousness, according to the light he has. 3. Is this the same with, "He that is sincere?" Nearly, if not quite.

4. Is not this "Salvation by works?" Not by the *merit* of works, but by works, as a *condition*. 5. What have we then been disputing about for these thirty years? I am afraid *about words*, (namely in some of the foregoing instances.) 6. As to *merit* itself, of which we have been so dreadfully afraid, we are rewarded, *according* to our works, yea, *because of our works*. How does this differ from *for the sake of our works*? And how differs this from *secundum merita operum*, As our works *deserve*? Can you split this hair? I doubt I cannot.

7. The grand objection to one of the preceding propositions, is drawn from matter of fact. God does in fact justify those, who by their own confession, neither feared God nor wrought righteousness. Is this an exception to the general rule? It is a doubt whether God makes any exception at all. But how are we sure that the person in question never did fear God and work righteousness? His own saying so is not proof: for we know how all that are convinced of sin, undervalue themselves in every respect.

8. Does not talking, without proper caution, of a justified or a sanctified *state*, tend to mislead men? Almost naturally leading them to trust in what was done in one moment? Whereas we are every moment pleasing or displeasing to God, *according to our works*. According to the whole of our inward tempers, and outward behaviour."

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When these Propositions were published, the Honourable and Rev. Walter Shirley, Chaplain to the Countess of Huntingdon, sent a circular letter through the three kingdoms, in which he declared, The minutes contained "dreadful heresy." This brought on a long controversy between the Calvinists and Arminians. In this dispute, the Rev. John Fletcher, one of the holiest men of this age, was eminently conspicuous. With wisdom and zeal becoming an Apostle, he vindicated the Minutes, and silenced his Antagonists. What he wrote upon that subject is contained in seven volumes duodecimo; and is well worthy the perusal of all lovers of the Bible.

This blessed man died August 14, 1785, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. His life was afterwards published by Mr. Wesley, and also by Mr. Gilpen: both these Memoirs are very useful and instructive.

Sunday, Nov. 18, Mr. Wesley being desired by *Mr. Whitfield's* Executors to preach his funeral sermon, he performed that labour of love on this day at the Tabernacle. That blessed man was found dead on his knees in his chamber on Sunday, Sept. 30, 1770, in Newbury, near Boston, in America, in the fifty-sixth year of his age. The text Mr. Wesley chose was, *Let me die the death of the righteous, and let my last end be like his.*

1771. In the beginning of this year, *John Smith*, one of the Preachers, who laboured mostly in the North of Ireland, died in the faith. He was a remarkably useful man. Many hundreds were converted by his instrumentality; upwards of twenty of whom afterwards became Preachers.



## CHAPTER THE SIXTH.

*From the Conference in 1771, to Mr. Wesley's death in 1791.*

**AUGUST** the 6th, 1771, The twenty-eighth Conference was held in Bristol. Mr. Wesley observes concerning it, "We had more Preachers than usual in consequence of Mr. Shirley's circular letter. At ten on Thursday morning, he came with nine or ten of his friends. We conversed freely for about two hours. And I believe they were satisfied, that we were not such dreadful Heretics as they imagined, but were tolerably sound in the faith!"

August 4, 1772, The twenty-ninth Conference was held at Leeds.

August 3, 1773, The thirtieth Conference in London.

August 9, 1774, The thirty-first Conference in Bristol.

Nothing new was done at these Conferences. The connexion enjoyed great internal peace though still warmly opposed by the Calvinists, on account of the minutes which were published in the year 1770.

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The Preachers were much united; but the Societies were in general burthened with debt, occasioned by their building Preaching-houses. The chief part of the time of these Conferences therefore was taken up in forming rules in order to extricate the People out of these difficulties.

In this year, Mr. Wesley published his works in thirty-two volumes duodecimo. Some of these were extracts from other writers, which he had long circulated among the people: others were wrote on the spur of the moment, and manifest the fertility of his mind; and others were composed in defence of the great doctrines of Christianity. They form a rich collection of the purest and most exalted divinity.

November 5, 1774, *John Downs*, who had been a Preacher for many years, died in the Lord. "On the day of his departure he said, "I feel such a love to the people at West-street, (London) that I could be content to die with them. I do not find myself very well; but I must be with them this evening." He went thither, and began Preaching on, *Come unto me ye that are weary and heavy laden.* After speaking ten or twelve minutes, he sunk down, and spoke no more, till his spirit returned to God. Mr. Wesley gives him the following character. "I suppose, he was by nature, full as great a genius as Sir Isaac Newton. I will mention but two or three instances of it. When he was at school, learning Algebra, he came one day to his master, and said, "Sir, I can prove this proposition a better way than it is proved in the book." His master thought it could not be; but upon trial, acknowledged it to be so. Some time after, his father sent him to *Newcas-*

He with a clock which was to be mended. He observed the clock-maker's tools, and the manner how he took it in pieces, and put it together again. And when he came home, first made himself tools, and then made a clock, which went as true as any in the town. A third proof of it was this. Thirty years ago, while I was shaving, he was whirling the top of a stick. I asked, "What are you doing?" He answered, "I am taking your face, which I intend to engrave on a copper-plate." Accordingly without any instruction, he first made himself tools, and then engraved the plate. The second picture which he engraved, was that which was prefixed to the Notes upon the New Testament. I suppose such strength of genius has scarce been known in *Europe* before.

For several months past, he had far deeper communion with God than ever he had in his life: and for some days he had been frequently saying, "I am so happy that I scarce know how to live. I enjoy such fellowship with God, as I thought could not be had on this side heaven." And having now finished his course of fifty-two years, after a long conflict with pain, sickness, and poverty, he gloriously rested from his labours, and entered into the joy of his Lord."

1775. In March of this year, Mr. *John Crook*, at that time a zealous Local Preacher, visited the *Isle of Man*. The Lord blessed his labours with uncommon success. He soon commenced an Itinerant Preacher; and has laboured in that Island at different times, between nine and ten years.

August 1, 1775, The thirty-second Conference was held in Leeds. Mr. Wesley observes concerning it: "Having received several letters, intimating



intimating that many of the Preachers were utterly unqualified for the work, having neither grace nor gifts sufficient for it, I determined to examine this weighty charge with all possible exactness. In order to this, I read those letters to the Conference; and begged, that every one would freely propose and inforce whatever objection he had to any one. The objections proposed were considered at large: in two or three difficult cases, Committees were appointed for that purpose. In consequence of this, we were all fully convinced, that the charge advanced was without foundation: that God had really sent those labourers into his vineyard, and had qualified them for the work. And we were all more closely united together than we had been for many years."

It was also asked 2. Are not many of the Classes too large?—*A.* Yes, Divide every one which contains above thirty members. It would be well if this rule were constantly attended to.

After the Preachers had signed the articles of Union, already mentioned, they concluded with these words, "We all deny that there is, or can be, *any merit, properly speaking, in Man.*"

August 6, 1776, The thirty-third Conference was held in London. Mr. Wesley was very strict in examining into the gifts, graces, and usefulness of the Preachers. The result was, one was excluded for insufficiency, and two for misbehaviour. And says he, "we were thoroughly satisfied, that all the rest had both grace and gifts for the work wherein they were engaged." At that time there were one hundred and fifty-five Travelling Preachers in Great Britain and Ireland.



Mr. Wesley's, Fletcher's, and Sellon's works were recommended to the Preachers as an antidote against the poison of absolute Predestination; in order that they might be enabled to guard the people against being drawn away by that doctrine.

August 13, 1776, Thomas Coke, L.L.D. joined Mr. Wesley. He thus speaks of this incident in his eighteenth Journal, page 23. "Being at Kingston, near Taunton, I found a Clergyman, Dr. Coke, late Gentleman-Commoner of Jesus College, in Oxford, who came twenty miles on purpose. I had much conversation with him, and a union then began, which I trust shall never end." His name did not appear on the Minutes till the year 1778. In that year he was appointed to labour in London. Since that time he has been a very active useful man in the connexion.

April 2, 1777, Mr. Wesley laid the foundation-stone of the New Chapel in London.

May 18, 1777, Mr. Wesley says in his journal. "I buried the body of *Joseph Guilford*, a holy man, and a useful Preacher. Surely never before did a man of so weak talents, do so much good! He died as he lived, in the full triumph of faith, vehemently rejoicing and praising God!"

August 5, 1777, The thirty-fourth Conference was held in Bristol. Mr. Wesley observes concerning it. "I now particularly enquired of every Assistant (as that report had been spread far and wide) Have you reason to believe from your own observation, that the Methodists are a fallen people? Is there a decay or an increase in the work of God where you have been

been? Are the Societies in general more dead or more alive to God than they were some years ago?" The almost universal answer was, "If we *must know them by their fruits*, there is no decay in the work of God; among the people in general. The Societies are not dead to God: they are as much alive as they have been for many years. And we look on this report as a mere device of Satan; to make our hands hang down."

"But to come to a short issue. In most places, the Methodists are still a poor despised people, labouring under reproach, and many inconveniencies: therefore, wherever the power of God is not, they decrease. By this then you may form a sure judgment. Do the Methodists in general decrease in number? Then they decrease in grace: they are a fallen, or at least a falling people. But they do not decrease in number; they continually increase: therefore they are not a fallen people."

"The Conference concluded in much love. But there was one jarring string; *John Hilton* told us, he must withdraw from our connexion, because he saw the Methodists were a fallen people."

Mr. Wesley, for the first time, mentioned in the Minutes of this Conference, those persons who died in the work.

2. What Preachers have died this year?—*A. John Slocombe*, at *Clones*, an old labourer, worn out in the service. *John Harrison*, near *Lisburn*, a promising youth, serious, modest, and much devoted to God. *William Lumley*, at *Hexham*, a blessed young man, a happy witness of the full liberty of the children of God. And *William Minethorp*

*Minethorp*, near *Dunbar*, an Israelite indeed, in whom was no guile.

The propriety of inserting these accounts appeared at once, so that the same has been done every year from that time. Thus an honourable testimony has been borne concerning those who have deserved it, and who have continued to labour in union with their brethren till they finished their course; it has served also to excite the survivors to follow them as they followed Christ.

Q. What is the Yearly subscription?—A. Nothing. There is only one contribution this year, namely, For the New Chapel in London.

Great exertions were made by the Preachers for that Chapel; but this was soon forgotten, and a law-suit commenced about it in little more than a year after Mr. Wesley's death! When the suit had cost 1200*l.* the difference was amicably settled! Before the agreement took place, the Lord Chancellor determined the four following particulars: 1. That the majority of the Trustees bound the minority in all things agreeable to the letter of the Trust-deed. 2. That the Trustees had a right to choose Stewards for themselves, in order to manage the concerns of the Trust. 3. That whatever money was subscribed by individuals and laid out on the Trust premises, was to be disposed of by the Trustees according to their Trust-deed. 4. That no Trustees could remove a Preacher from the Pulpit without proving him immoral in his life, or erroneous in his doctrine.

January 1, 1778, Mr. Wesley began to publish a periodical work, which he entitled "The Arminian Magazine; consisting of Extracts and Original Treatises on Universal Redemption." He continued



tinued this work while he lived. The Conference have done the same since his death. It is a very useful work, has been widely circulated, and has done much good.

1778. This summer Mr. Wesley held a Conference at Dublin, in Ireland. The Rev. Edward Smyth, (who some time before had been expelled from a church in the North of Ireland, for preaching the truth,) was now in connexion with the Methodists. He revived the controversy respecting the Church of England, and laboured with all his might, and with manifest uprightness of mind, to persuade Mr. Wesley and the brethren to separate from it. The debate ended by the Conference agreeing to the following propositions, which were afterwards adopted by the English Conference, and published in the Minutes.

2. Is it not our duty to separate from the Church, considering the wickedness both of the Clergy and the People?—*A.* We conceive not.  
 1. Because both the Priests and the People were full as wicked in the Jewish Church, and yet God never commanded the Holy Israelites to separate from them. 2. Neither did our Lord command his Disciples to separate from them, he rather commanded the contrary. 3. Hence it is clear, *that could not be the meaning of St. Paul's words, Come out from among them, and be ye separate.*"

2. Have we a right view of our work?—*A.* Perhaps not. It is not to take care of this or that Society, or to preach so many times: but to save as many souls as we can: to bring as many sinners as we can to repentance, and with all our power to build them up in that holiness, without which they cannot see the Lord.

August



August 4, 1778, The thirty-fifth Conference was held in Leeds. The following Minute is all that is either new or important.

Q. Is it not advisable for us to visit all the jails we can?—A. By all means. There cannot be a greater charity.”

Sunday, Nov. 1, Mr. Wesley opened the new Chapel in London.

August 3, 1779, The thirty-sixth Conference was held in London. Now, for the first time, appeared a general decrease, which made Mr. Wesley enquire,

Q. How can we account for the decrease in so many Circuits this year?—A. It may be owing, partly to want of preaching abroad, and of trying new places: partly to prejudice against the King, and *speaking evil of dignities*,\* but chiefly to the increase of *worldly mindedness*, and *conformity to the world*.

Q. How can we stop this evil speaking?—A. Suffer none that speak evil of those in Authority, or that prophesy evil to the Nation, to preach with us. Let every Assistant take care of this.

There was also a want of money to carry on the work. The Collections fell short. This induced the Conference to adopt the following measures, that it might not be so in future. Part of the Yearly subscription had been hitherto set apart to pay off the debts of the Chapels; it was now agreed that it should be so no more. The following regulations were adopted. “1. Let every Circuit bear its own burden, and not lean upon the Conference. 2. Tell every one expressly

\* At the time of the American War.

pressly, "We do not make a subscription for paying debts." 3. Let all the Assistants in Ireland do the same as those in England."

From hence it appears, that the *support* of the Gospel depends on the piety of the people. This is universally true.

The following Minutes also appear.

2. Shall any Assistant take into the Society, any whom his Predecessor has put out?—*A.* Not without first consulting him.

2. What can be done to revive the work in Scotland?—*A.* 1. Preach abroad as much as possible. 2. Try every town and village. 3. Visit every member of every society at home.

Sunday, August 8, 1779, Mr. Wesley observes in his Journal, "This was the last night which I spent at the Foundry. What hath God wrought there in one and forty years!!" He now removed to the House built for him and the Preachers in the City Road.

August 1, 1780, The thirty-seventh Conference began at Bristol. Mr. Wesley observes concerning it, "We have been always hitherto straitened for time. In future let nine or ten days be allowed for each Conference, that every thing relative to the carrying on of the work of God may be maturely considered." At this time the large Minutes containing the whole of our discipline, were revised, and solemnly confirmed.

June 7, 1781, Mr. Wesley being in the Isle of Man, says, "I met our little body of Preachers. There were two and twenty in all." (Local Preachers.) So greatly had God blessed the word since Mr. Crook first visited them in the year 1775!

Aug.

August 7, 1781, The thirty-eighth Conference was held at Leeds. The following matters were considered.

2. If Bankrupts ever are able, is it not their duty to pay their whole debt?—*A.* Doubtless it is. If they do not, they ought not to continue in our Society.

2. Ought we not to exhort all dying persons, to be then, at least, merciful after their power?—*A.* We ought; without any regard to the reflections which will be cast upon us on that account.

In July 1782, Dr. Coke was delegated by Mr. Wesley to hold a Conference in Dublin. This has been continued annually at the same place ever since, and Dr. Coke has for the most part presided at it. It has, under God, proved a great blessing to the Irish Methodists. At this time, (1782) there were only fifteen Circuits, Thirty-four Travelling Preachers, and six thousand four hundred and seventy-two members in the Societies. At present (1799) there are more than double that number of Circuits, Preachers and Members.

August 6, 1782, The thirty-ninth Conference was held in London. At this time the Trustees of the Chapel at Birstall, in Yorkshire, manifested a want of confidence in Mr. Wesley, and the Conference. They desired liberty to chuse Preachers, in connexion with the Body; but they were not willing to submit to the appointment of the Conference. They were the more positive in this, as their Chapel was not settled according to the Methodist plan.

This was the first time that any thing of the kind appeared. (It was in this place that *John Nelson*



Nelson began his labours. The following resolutions were adopted.

2. What can be done with regard to the preaching-house at Birstall?—*A.* If the Trustees still refuse to settle it on the Methodist plan, 1. Let a plain state of the case be drawn up. 2. Let a collection be made throughout all England, in order to purchase ground, and to build another preaching-house as near the present as may be. This difference after a time, was amicably settled. The following minutes also appear.

2. Several members of our Societies who make a conscience of Sabbath-breaking, have been much distressed; *Barbers* in particular. What can be done to relieve them?—*A.* 1. Let no members of our Society have their hair dressed on a Sunday. 2. Let all our members that possibly can, employ those Barbers.

2. Is it well for our Preachers to powder their hair, or to wear artificial curls?—*A.* To abstain from both is the more excellent way.

2. Ought any person to be continued as a member of our Society in Ireland, who learns, or performs, the military exercise as a Volunteer, on the Lord's-day?—*A.* No: certainly. Let him be excluded. *N. B.* Meeting on the parade, in order to attend divine service, is not to be considered as an infringement of this rule. Nor shall the above Minute refer to any thing which it may be necessary for them to do, in case of an actual invasion.

2. Ought any person to be excluded our Society, who after proper admonition, will on the Lord's-day, continue a spectator of the exercise of the Volunteers?—*A.* Certainly they ought.

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Several of the old Minutes were now reprinted; one in particular, which declares, that no person can be a Travelling Preacher, who cannot preach both morning and evening.

July 29, 1783. The fortieth Conference was held in Bristol. Mr. Wesley found it necessary at this time, to change the Master of Kingswood School, on account of a total want of discipline. He observes also, "The children must never play; and a Master must be always present with them." He would have them, instead of play, to learn husbandry, or some mechanic art. At this Conference it was also enquired,

Q. What can be done to get all our preaching-houses settled on the Methodist plan?—A. Let Dr. Coke visit the Societies throughout England, as far as is necessary for the accomplishment of this design: and let the respective Assistants give him all the support in their power. This work exposed the Doctor for a time to a great deal of reproach, and in many instances he failed of his object.

February 14, 1784, Mr. Wesley consulted with the London Preachers respecting a proposal of sending Missionaries to the East-Indies; and observes, "After the matter had been fully considered, we were unanimous in our judgment—That we have no call thither yet, no invitation, no providential opening of any kind." Perhaps the time will shortly come.

February 28, 1784, Mr. Wesley executed the DEED OF DECLARATION, constituting one hundred of the Travelling Preachers, "The Conference of the People called Methodists." He got it

it enrolled in his Majesty's High Court of Chancery. The design of this was to give a legal specification of that phrase "The Conference of the people called Methodists," which is inserted in all the Deeds of the Chapels. By virtue of this Deed, the Conference claims the power of appointing Preachers to preach in those Chapels.

July 27, 1784, The forty-first Conference was held at Leeds. Mess. John Hampson, sen. and John Hampson, jun. his son; William Eells, and Joseph Pillmoor, with a few other Travelling Preachers, were greatly offended at the Deed Mr. Wesley had executed. Their names were not inserted in it. They strove to make a party among the Preachers, but were disappointed. By Mr. Fletcher's friendly efforts, a partial reconciliation was effected between them and Mr. Wesley: but it was of short continuance. Soon after the Conference, Mr. Hampson, senior, became an Independant Minister. Mr. Hampson, jun. procured Ordination in the Established Church, and got a living in Sunderland, in the North of England. Mr. Eells also left the connexion, and some time after, joined Mr. Atlay at Dewsbury; and Mr. Pillmoor went to America, but not in connexion with Mr. Wesley.

At this Conference it was considered,

Q. Is not the time of Trial for Preachers too short?—A. It is. For the time to come, let them be on trial four years.

2. Many of our brethren have been exceedingly hurt by frequenting Feasts or Wakes on Sundays. What do you advise in this case?—A. Let none of our brethren make any Feast or Wake,

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neither

neither go to any on Sunday, but bear a public testimony against them.

2. Is the making candles for our own use, without paying duty for them, contrary to law? — *A.* Certainly it is. It is a species of smuggling, not to be practised by any honest man.

Mr. Nicholas Manners, one of the Travelling Preachers, had disturbed the connexion in some measure, by preaching false doctrine: He denied Original sin. His case was considered at this Conference, and the Brethren came to the following conclusion. — “No Preacher who denies Original sin, can preach among us: and we advise our brethren not to hear him.” He was a good mistaken man. After some time he went to America, and strove to spread his opinions there; but he failed in his design. He then returned to England, and sunk into obscurity.

One of the Norman Isles, *Jersey*, appeared on the Minutes at this time. Mr. Wesley had sent Mr. Brackenbury, a gentleman of Lincolnshire, to visit them. His labours were crowned with success in Jersey, where he continued a few years. In 1786, Mr. Adam Clarke was sent to assist him, who formed a Society in *Guernsey* also. Since that time, Societies have been also formed in *Alderney* and *Sark*, and religion flourishes in them all.

The Methodists had hitherto *one form* both of Worship and Discipline in every place; but an extraordinary Providence, the Independance of America, confirmed by the peace of 1783, occasioned an extraordinary change in this respect. During the war, the Societies on that Continent were deprived of the Ordinances of God, Baptism, and the Lord's Supper, the Clergy of the Church of England,

land having been generally silenced, or having fled to England. From the time of the peace, the new Civil Government was universally acknowledged; but no Ecclesiastical authority of any kind was either exercised or claimed by any person or persons whatsoever. In this situation, the Societies desired Mr. Wesley's advice; and, as he observes, "his scruples being at an end, he conceived himself at perfect liberty to exercise that right which he doubted not God had given him." He accordingly, soon after the Conference, with the assistance of other Ministers, ordained Dr. Coke, and through him, Mr. Asbury, to be joint *Superintendants* over the brethren in North America: as also Richard Whatcoat and Thomas Vesey, to act as *Elders* among them. He likewise abridged the Liturgy of the Church of England, and advised all the Travelling Preachers to use it on the Lord's day, in all their Congregations: and the Elders to administer the Lord's Supper every Sabbath, according to the same ritual.

Several persons, especially some who had left the work, seemed much displeased with Mr. Wesley on account of his thus acting as a *Bishop*, as they termed it. But those who regarded Holy Scripture, and the Episcopacy of the Primitive Church; and considered the extraordinary call which Mr. Wesley now had to the exercise of this authority, were perfectly satisfied, that he acted in the order of God. The great increase of the Societies, and of true religion among them since that time, has abundantly confirmed this sentiment. That circumstance also, the Ordination being private, which gave scope to the ill nature of these persons, had no weight with those im-



prejudiced persons, who considered, that the persons ordained were Itinerants, not appointed to any particular Church, and consequently not needing *that kind* of sanction which may be needful for Ministers who are exclusively to Superintend a particular flock. But there is nothing, however scriptural or reasonable, that may not be censured by bigotry or malevolence.

March 24, 1785, Mr. Wesley observes in his Journal, "I was now considering, how strangely the grain of mustard-seed, planted about fifty years ago, had grown up. It has spread through all *Great Britain*, and *Ireland*, the *Isle of Wight*, and the *Isle of Man*: then to *America*, through the whole continent, into *Canada*; the *Leeward Islands*, and *Newfoundland*. And the Societies in all these parts, walk by one rule; knowing religion is holy tempers, and striving to worship God, not in form only, but likewise in *spirit* and in *truth*."

May 9, 1795, On this day that venerable and holy man, the Rev. Mr. Perronet, Vicar of Shoreham, entered into the joy of his Lord, in the ninety-second year of his age. Two days before his death, his grand-daughter, Miss Briggs, who attended him day and night, read to him the three last chapters of Isaiah. He then desired her to go into the garden, to take a little fresh air. Upon her return she found him in an extasy, with the tears running down his cheeks, from a deep and lively sense of the glorious things which she had just been reading to him; and which he believed would shortly be fulfilled in a still more glorious sense than heretofore. He continued unspeakably happy all that day. On Sunday his happiness seemed even to increase, till he retired

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to rest. Miss Briggs then went into the room to see if any thing was wanting; and as she stood at the feet of the bed, he smiled and said, "God bless thee, my dear child, and all that belongs to thee! Yea, he will bless thee!" This he earnestly repeated till she left the room. When she went in the next morning, his happy spirit was returned to God!

This blessed man, (like those great and good men, Mess. Grimshaw and Fletcher,) being possessed of the *Love that envieth not, but rejoiceth in the Truth*, continued steadily attached to Mr. Wesley, and to the Methodists, from the first day unto the last. He received the Preachers joyfully, fitted up a room in the Parsonage-house for preaching, and attended their Ministry himself at every opportunity, evermore praising God for what he heard. His house was one of the regular places of the Kent Circuit, (and so continued to the day of his death,) and all his family were members of the Society. Had all the Ministers of the Established Church, or even those of them who were convinced of the truth preached by Mr. Wesley and his Assistants, behaved in this truly Christian manner, Methodism, so called, *i. e.* the Doctrine and practice of Evangelical Holiness, would, according to Mr. Wesley's hope, have leavened the Church, and even the shadow of separation from it would have been prevented.

July 26, 1785, The forty-second Conference was held in London. Mr. Wesley remarks concerning it, "About seventy preachers were present, whom I had invited by name. One consequence of this was, that we had no contention

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or altercation at all, but every thing proposed was calmly considered, and determined as we judged would be most for the glory of God."

"Having (he continues) with a few select Friends, weighed the matter thoroughly, I yielded to their judgment, and set apart three of our well tried Preachers, *John Pawson*, *Thomas Hanby*, and *Joseph Taylor*, to minister in Scotland. And I trust God will bless their ministrations, and shew that he has sent them." He also recommended to the Scotch Methodists, the use of the abridged Common Prayer. This latter they declined; the former they were thankful for. The reasons he gave for this (in the Minutes of the Conference in 1786) are, 1. That he never was connected with the Church of Scotland. 2. The desire of doing more good. 3. The absolute necessity of the case, as the *Scotch Ministers* had repeatedly refused to give the Methodists the Sacrament, unless they would leave the Societies.

The following rules were considered and agreed to.

Q. Is it proper to sell any books on the Lord's day?—A. By no means. Neither to talk of worldly things, more than is strictly necessary.

Q. Is it lawful to employ a hair-dresser on a Sunday?—A. We are all fully persuaded it is not.

Q. Is it right to send our children to a dancing school?—A. It is entirely wrong. Neither do we think it right for any that keep boarding-schools to admit a dancing-master into their house.

The American Minutes were published with those of the English Conference, and continued to be so, with a few exceptions, till the year 1790. It was then thought unnecessary to publish any thing

thing more than the numbers in the Societies, which is still done every year.

The British dominions in America, viz. Nova Scotia, New Brunswick, and Newfoundland, appeared for the first time on the Minutes of this year.

Methodism had its rise in the following manner in these parts.

In the year 1765, Mr. Lawrence Coughlan, at that time a Travelling Preacher, in connexion with Mr. Wesley, was ordained by the Bishop of London, at the request of the Society for the propagation of Christian Knowledge, that he might be qualified for the office of a Missionary in the Island of Newfoundland. He accordingly went there, and his labours were crowned with success in several parts of the Island. After seven years continuance there, he returned home through want of health. The people were then as sheep that had no shepherd. After a time the Lord raised up a few of the inhabitants, who had been Methodists in these kingdoms. They formed Societies, and exhorted the people to walk according to the Methodist rules. To encourage them three Travelling Preachers were then sent thither, two from the *United States*, and one from England. Newfoundland has continued on our Minutes since that time, unless perhaps when their accounts could not come time enough for insertion.

In the year 1791, a favourable change took place in their behalf. *Mr. William Black*, (who was born in Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, in the year 1760,) visited Newfoundland. His labours were attended with great success. In the year 1792, he was appointed Superintendant of the whole



whole work in British America; which office he has held ever since. He has been instrumental in uniting the scattered members, restoring discipline, and by the united labours of himself and his brethren, the kingdom of God has been greatly enlarged in these parts.

July 25, 1786, The forty-third Conference was held in Bristol. The question respecting our union with the Church was still agitated, and after much deliberation the following regulations were adopted.

2. In what cases do we allow of service in Church hours?—A. 1. When the Minister is a notoriously wicked man. 2. When he preaches Arian, or any equally pernicious doctrine. 3. When there are no Churches in the town sufficient to contain half the people. And, 4. When there is no Church at all within two or three miles. And we advise every one who preaches in the Church hours to read the Psalms and Lessons with part of the Church prayers; because we apprehend this will endear the Church service to our brethren, who probably would be prejudiced against it, if they heard none but extemporary prayer. Mr. Wesley accordingly recommended to his Societies the abridged Common Prayer Book, under the following title, “The Sunday Service of the Methodists.”—He certainly approved of a Liturgy, or Form of Prayer, for Public Worship, as many enlightened men have done; but in many parts the people did not approve of it, even where they wished to be allowed service in the Church hours.

The cases mentioned above, in which the service might be allowed, are certainly weighty, and plainly

plainly shew, that Mr. Wesley was fully convinced, that some kind of separation might, in particular cases, be a duty. But he truly loved the *Church itself*, and from it he would not separate.

Mr. Wesley gave the following advice to the Preachers at this time,—“Never preach a Funeral Sermon but for an eminently holy person: nor then without consulting the Assistant. Preach none for hire. Beware of panegyric, particularly in London.”

At this Conference Mr. Wesley appointed Dr. Coke to visit the Societies in the British dominions in America. He also sent *William Warrener*, whom he appointed to labour as a Missionary in Antigua, and *William Hammett*, and *John Clarke*, to labour as Missionaries in Newfoundland. With these the Doctor sailed. By distress of weather they were prevented from going to the place of their destination; so they all landed on Christmas day 1786, on the Island of Antigua. Here they found a large Methodist Society walking in the fear of God, who welcomed them in the name of the Lord.

The following particulars shew the rise of Methodism in this Island. *Nathaniel Gilbert*, Esq. Speaker of the House of Assembly in Antigua, who had heard the Gospel in England, wrote a letter to Mr. Wesley, dated May 10, 1760, in which he informed him there was then the dawn of a Gospel day in that Island. Mr. Gilbert had begun to exhort the Islanders to turn to the Lord, and had considerable success.

In 1779, Mr. John Baxter, a Local Preacher, went from the Royal Dock at Chatham to that Island. He watered the seed sown by Mr. Gilbert.

bert. He afterwards resigned his office, which he held under Government, in order to preach the Gospel to the poor slaves.

Dr. Coke considered his being driven to the West-Indies as providential. He therefore left the two Missionaries intended for America, to labour in these Islands with Mr. Baxter and Mr. Warrenner, where there was the greatest prospect of doing good. These were the first Missionaries from the English Conference to the West-India Islands. Since that time the work has greatly increased in these Islands. We now (1799) have Missionaries in Antigua, Dominica, St. Vincent's, Barbadoes, Grenada, St. Christopher's, Nevis and Montserrat, In Tortola, Spanish Town and the other Virgin Islands. In St. Bartholomew's, Jamaica, Providence and the other Bahama Islands. And at Bermuda. There is a prospect of doing much good in all these places. So greatly has the Lord prospered his work in thirteen years!

August 9, 1786, Mr. Wesley set out on his second visit to *Holland*; and returned Sept. 6. His former visit was in the year 1783. He found there a truly pious people to whom he preached several times, and rejoiced to find that *true* religion was essentially the same in every place.

July 31, 1787, The forty-fourth Conference was held in Manchester. The following particulars were considered.

2 Are there any directions to be given concerning Preachers to whom we are strangers?—

A. 1. Let no person that is not in connexion with us preach in any of our Chapels, or Preaching-houses, without a note from Mr. Wesley or from the Assistant of the Circuit from whence he comes,

comes, which must be renewed yearly. 2. Let none of our friends who travel on business expect to be entertained at the Preachers houses.

2. Are there any directions to be given concerning singing?—*A.* Let no Anthems be introduced into any of our Chapels, or Preaching-houses, for the time to come, because they cannot properly be called *joint* worship.

Nov. 3, 1787, Mr. Wesley observes in his last journal,\* “I had a long conversation with Mr. *Chulow*, (an Attorney) on that execrable Act, called the Conventicle Act. After consulting the Act of Toleration, with that of the fourteenth of Queen Anne, we were both clearly convinced, that it was the safest way to license all our Chapels, and all our Travelling Preachers. And that no justice, or bench of justices, has any authority to refuse licensing either the Houses or the Preachers.” He was not willing that either should be licensed before this time, as he greatly wished to continue his connexion with the National Church, so far as the blessed work of *saving souls from death* in every place would permit.

† Mr. Wesley had hitherto ordained Ministers only for America and Scotland, but from this period, being assisted by other Presbyters of the Church of England, he set apart a certain number of Preachers for the sacred office by the imposition of his hands and prayer, without sending them out of England, strongly advising them at the same time, that according to his example they should continue united to the Established Church, so far as the blessed work in which they were engaged would permit.

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\* Page 85.

† Mr. Wesley's Life by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, page 500.



I have noted in order every step which Mr. Wesley took with respect to his union with the Church of England; and from the whole does it not appear, that his settled judgment at length was, That by the great and continued encrease of the Societies, and the difference of opinion on that subject, among both Preachers and People, as well as from the behaviour of many of the Clergy, it would be absolutely necessary that the Ordinances should be administered to *those who desired them*?—And that he therefore took these steps that there might, in this extension of privilege, be as near a conformity to the Church of England as possible?—Can it be denied that this is more agreeable to the *whole* of the work in which he had been so long engaged, than any other more contracted plan could be?—And is it not certain that the union of the body could not have been maintained in any other way?—This will be still more evident in the subsequent parts of this History.

March 29, 1788, This day Mr. Charles Wesley fell asleep. His brother gave him the following character in the yearly Minutes.

2. Who died this year?—A. *Charles Wesley*, who after spending fourscore years with much sorrow and pain, quietly retired into Abraham's bosom. He had no disease, but after a gradual decay of some months,

“The weary wheels of life stood still at last.”

His least praise was his talent for poetry: although Dr. Watts did not scruple to say, That, “that single poem, *Wrestling Jacob*, was worth all the verses he himself had written.”

The Hymns which were composed by him

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are those which are chiefly used by the Methodists in their worship; and they certainly breathe more of the spirit of genuine religion than any which are borrowed from other Poets.

The last verses he composed were these.

- " In age and feebleness extreme,
- " Who shall a helpless worm redeem?
- " Jesu! my only hope thou art,
- " Strength of my failing flesh and heart,
- " Oh! could I catch a smile from thee,
- " And drop into eternity!

He could scarcely articulate when he dictated these to his wife.

May 13, 1788, Mr. Wesley taking a review of the work in which he had spent his life, thus remarks especially on its scriptural liberality. " There is no other Religious Society under heaven, which requires nothing of men in order to their admission into it, but a *desire to save their souls*. Look all around you, you cannot be admitted into the Church or Society of the *Presbyterians, Anabaptists, Quakers*, or any other, unless you hold the same opinions with them, and adhere to the same mode of worship. The *Methodists* alone do not insist on your holding this or that opinion, but they *think* and *let think*. Neither do they impose any particular mode of worship, but you may continue to worship in your former manner, be it what it may. Now I do not know any other religious society either ancient or modern, wherein such liberty of conscience is now allowed, or has been allowed since the age of the Apostles! Here is our glorying, and a glorying peculiar to us! What Society shares it with us?"—Blessed be God we still enjoy this liberty; and even with encrease!

July 29, 1788, The forty-fifth Conference was held in London. Mr. Wesley's account of it is: "One of the most important points considered at this Conference was, That respecting the Church. The sum of a long conversation was, 1. That in a course of fifty years, we had neither premeditatedly nor willingly varied from it in one article, either of doctrine or discipline. 2. That we were not yet conscious of varying from it in any point of *doctrine*. 3. That we have in a course of years, out of necessity, not choice, slowly and warily varied in some points of *discipline* by preaching in the fields, by extemporary prayer, by employing Lay-Preachers, by forming and regulating Societies, and by holding yearly Conferences. But we did none of these things till we were convinced we could no longer omit them; but at the peril of our souls." It is evident from this account that with regard to *discipline*, Mr. Wesley followed the Scripture and the openings of Providence. What the Conference has done since his death has been perfectly agreeable to the same plan.

The following new rule was made at this Conference.

2. Many of our Preachers have been obliged to go from the house of one friend to another for all their meals, to the great loss of their time and to the injury of the work of God. What can be done to prevent this evil in future.—*A*. Let every Circuit provide a sufficient allowance for the Preachers, that they may in general eat their meals at their own lodgings.

July 28, 1789, The forty-sixth Conference was held in Leeds.—A very painful business came before the brethren. A new Chapel had been built at

at Dewsbury, in Yorkshire, as usual by subscription; but those who were nominated Trustees, assumed the Proprietorship, and refused to settle it according to the Methodist plan. The consequence was, that after some fruitless negociation, another Chapel was built, and a collection was made, first in the Conference, and then throughout England, to defray the expence.

It is remarkable that only two instances of this kind occurred while Mr. Wesley lived. The former, namely Birstall, was soon settled; this latter dispute never was; and true religion received a wound in the contention which it has never recovered in that place.

Mr. Wesley thus speaks of this occurrence in his journal, "About a hundred Preachers were present, and never was our Master more eminently present with us. Saturday, Aug. 1. We considered the case of *Dewsbury-house*, which the self-erected Trustees robbed us of. The point they contended for was this, "That they should have a right of rejecting any Preachers, which *they* should disapprove." But this we saw would destroy Itinerancy. So they chose *John Atley*, (Mr. Wesley's Book-steward) for a Preacher, who adopted *William Eells* (see page 123,) for his Curate. Nothing remained but to build another Preaching-house, towards which we subscribed two hundred and six pounds on the spot."

It was asserted concerning some of the Preachers, that they did not approve of settling the Chapels on the Methodist plan; therefore, one hundred and fifteen, being all that were present at the Conference, signed a paper, expressive of their entire approbation of that plan; namely, That *Mr. Wesley*, and after him the *Conference*,



should have the entire nomination and appointment of the Preachers to the Chapels, it being impossible to continue the Itinerant plan in any other way.

It was asked, 2. Are there any directions to be given to the Preachers?—*A.* Yes. 1. Let the rules of the Society be read in every Society once a quarter. 2. Let no person into the Love-feast without a Society Ticket; or a note from the Assistant. 3. Let every Watch-night continue till midnight. 4. Let the money collected at the Love-feasts be most conscientiously given to the poor. 5. Let no Preacher go out to supper, or be from home after nine at night. 6. Let the Preachers children dress exactly according to the rules of the Bands.

At these three Conferences, viz. 1787, 1788, and 1789, several directions were given relative to building Chapels, and making collections for them. Also towards lessening the expence that fell upon those places where the Conferences were held, and those Societies where chiefly the Preachers were entertained in going to and coming from the Conference. They clearly shew how unwilling the brethren were to burden one Society more than another.—At the Conference in 1783, Mr. Wesley acknowledged, that “the needlessly multiplying of Preaching-houses was a great evil,” but it does not appear that he or the Conference could prevent it. So they endeavoured to bear it as well as they could.

July 27, 1790, The forty-seventh Conference was held in Bristol. This was the last at which Mr. Wesley was present. From the Minutes it appears, he appointed nine Preachers as “a Committee for the management of the West-India affairs.”

affairs," *i. e.* the Missions; and six Preachers to be a building Committee for Great Britain, and four for Ireland. It would appear by this that he wished to see the different labours of the Conference divided into separate Committees, which would undoubtedly save a great deal of time, and give scope to the talents of many more of the Preachers than can be at present employed in the business that comes before them.

The following rules were also agreed to, 1. No Preacher shall preach *three* times the *same day* to the *same congregation*. 2. No Preacher shall preach oftener than twice on a week day, or oftener than three times on the Lord's day. 3. No Preacher shall in future leave the Conference before the conclusion of it, without consent publicly obtained in the Conference.

The general Minutes from 1744 to 1789, were at that time published. From them we learn the manner in which the Preachers proceed to business at the Conference. It is thus detailed:—

2. What is the method wherein we usually proceed in our Conferences?—*A.* We enquire,

1. What Preachers are admitted into full connexion this year?

2. Who remain on trial?

3. Who are admitted on trial?

4. Who desist from travelling?

5. Who have died this year?

6. Are there any objections to any of the Preachers? (they are then named one by one.)

7. How are the Preachers stationed this year?

8. What numbers are in the Societies?

9. What is the Kingswood collection?

10. What

10. What boys are received this year?
11. What girls are assisted?
12. What is contributed for the yearly expences?
13. How was it expended?
14. What is contributed towards the fund for superannuated Preachers and Widows?
15. What demands are there upon it?
16. How many Preachers wives are to be provided for?
17. By what Societies?
18. When and where may our next Conference begin?

Since Mr. Wesley's death, when the Preachers assemble, the first thing they do is to elect a President and Secretary, which is done by ballot. The minutes of the Districts are then read over: after which the Conference proceeds according to the above method.

I shall conclude this chapter with an account of the Conferences Mr. Wesley held in Ireland; and with a view of the state of the connexion at the time of his death.

August 14, 1752, The first Conference was held in Limerick. Mr. Wesley only observes concerning it, "These two days I spent in Conference with our Preachers."

April 20, 1756, The second began in Dublin. His account of it is, "All our Preachers met. I never before found such unanimity among them. They appeared not only to be of one heart, but likewise of one mind and judgment."

June 17, 1758, The third in Limerick. He observes, "Our little Conference began, at which fourteen preachers were present. We settled all things

things here, which we judged would be of use to the Preachers or the Societies, and consulted how to remove whatever might be an hindrance to the work of God."

July 5, 1760, The fourth was also held in Limerick. He says, "Ten of us met in a little Conference. By the blessing of God we were all of one mind, particularly with regard to the Church. Willing to attend there, be the Minister good or bad."

The other Conferences were all held in Dublin, and generally in every second year; but Mr. Wesley for the most part only mentions them without entering into any particulars.

July 18, 1775, The eleventh Conference was held immediately after a severe illness which Mr. Wesley had in the North of Ireland. At that time, Mr. Payne, one of the Preachers, prayed, "that God would add to the life of his aged servant, fifteen years!" Mr. Gayer, at whose house Mr. Wesley lay, declared, "That he had no doubt God would answer the prayer." It is remarkable, that Mr. Wesley lived after this fifteen years and a few months.

July 7, 1778, The twelfth Conference was held in Dublin. The Minutes were then, for the first time, published. The same has been done at every succeeding Conference; but these Minutes contain nothing material, except the increase of the Societies, which will be noted in the general statement.

July 3, 1789; The sixteenth (the last Conference at which Mr. Wesley presided) was held in Dublin. He observes concerning it, "I had much



much satisfaction in this Conference; in which conversing with between forty and fifty Travelling Preachers, I found such a body of men as I hardly believed could have been brought together in Ireland; men of so sound experience, so deep piety, and so strong understanding, that I am convinced they are no way inferior to the English Conference, except it be in number."

*The state of the Connexion at the Conference  
preceding the Death of Mr. Wesley.*

Circuits.	Preachers.	Members.
In England - - - - 65	195	52,832
In Ireland - - - - 29	67	14,106
In Wales - - - - 3	7	566
In Scotland - - - - 8	18	1086
In the Isle of Man - 1	3	2580
In the Norman Isles 2	4	498
In the West India Isles 7	13	4500
In the British Dom- nions in America } 4	6	800
In the United States of America - - } 97	198	43,265
216	511	120,233

The first Preachers began to assist Mr. Wesley, as Itinerants, in the year 1740. Twenty-five years after, viz. in the year 1765, their Names and Stations were published in the Minutes of the Conference. We have already seen that there were then *Ninety-six* Preachers labouring on the different Circuits: These may be considered as the first race of Methodist Preachers. Exactly twenty-five years after this, viz. in the year 1790, there

there were *Three hundred and thirteen* under the immediate direction of Mr. Wesley and the Conference: These may be considered as the second race\*. Those who have been admitted since Mr. Wesley's death, may be considered as the third race:—Men of a most excellent spirit, and much devoted to God.

\* For their names, and the year when each began to travel, see the Appendix, No. II.

## CHAPTER

## CHAPTER THE SEVENTH.

*From Mr. Wesley's Death in 1791, to the Conference in 1794.*

ON Wednesday, March 2, 1791, at ten o'clock in the forenoon, Mr. Wesley departed this life, at his house in the City Road, London. He fell asleep while several of the Preachers, with the family, were on their knees commending him to God. He had preached on the preceding Thursday at Leatherhead, on the London Circuit, and was but five days confined. He had often prayed that he might not live to be useless, and his prayer was answered. His last words were, "The best of all is, God is with us!"

The death of such a man was no common loss. It was deeply felt by the whole connexion. Thousands of the people, with all the Travelling Preachers, went into mourning for him. The Pulpits, and many of the Chapels, not only in the Methodist connexion, but in others also, were hung with black cloath. In every place something was said by way of Funeral Sermon; and in many places Discourses were preached on the same subject, which were afterwards published. Many Ministers, both of the Establishment, and among the Dissenters, mentioned his long, laborious, devoted, useful life, with great respect; and exhorted

exhorted their hearers to be followers of him as he had been of Christ.

Mr. Wesley's WILL\* being read, it was found that he had bequeathed all his books, (his only property) with the copies of them, (subject to a debt of one thousand six hundred pounds, due to the widow and children of his Brother, by marriage settlement,) to *Mr. John Horton, Mr. George Wolff, and Mr. William Marriott*, in trust for the general fund of the Methodist Conference, in carrying on the work of God by Itinerant Preachers; on condition that they should permit the Rev. Dr. Coke, the Rev. James Creighton, the Rev. Peard Dickinson, Mr. Thomas Rankin, Mr. George Whitfield, and the London Assistant for the time being, to superintend the Printing-Press, and to employ the Printer, &c. as heretofore: and to two of this Committee, viz. Mr. Rankin, and Mr. Whitfield, he bequeathed all his Types, Printing-Presses, and every thing pertaining thereto, in trust for the use of the Conference.

His Manuscripts he bequeathed to *Dr. Coke, Dr. Whitehead, and Mr. Henry Moore*, to be burnt or published, as they should see good. The three gentlemen first named were appointed Executors, and the WILL, which was dated the 20th of February, 1789, was witnessed by *William and Elizabeth Chulow*.

An Inventory of the stock of books was taken soon after Mr. Wesley's interment; and his Manuscripts, with all the letters of his Correspondents, were then also carefully sealed up, and deposited with Mr. Rogers, the Superintendant of the

\* See the Appendix, No. III.



the London Circuit, until Dr. Coke should return from America, in order that they might be examined, and disposed of according to the WILL: a printed copy of which was sent to all the Travelling Preachers in the connexion, signed by the three Executors, and also by the Preachers in London, with the following note subjoined.—  
 “Since the death of the Rev. Mr. Wesley, a DEED, bearing date October 5, 1790, and executed by him before two witnesses, hath appeared, wherein he gives all his books, stock in trade, &c. to Thomas Coke, Alexander Mather, Peard Dickinson, John Valton, James Rogers, Joseph Taylor, and Adam Clarke, *in trust*, for carrying on the work of God by Itinerant Preachers; subject to the debt already mentioned, with all debts and legacies specified in the Will.

“*N. B.* The intent of this Deed, with respect to the application of the produce of the books, &c. is exactly the same as expressed in the Will; and the Executors and Trustees are perfectly agreed, and resolved to act in concert in fulfilling the desire of the deceased.”

A short time after Mr. Wesley's death, a report being circulated, that Mr. Hampson, formerly a Travelling Preacher,\* had a history of Mr. Wesley ready for the press; the Executors with the concurrence of the Committee for printing,

\* See page 123. His father had been a Travelling Preacher many years, and the son was educated at Kingswood School. Through his father's influence he also was received as a Travelling Preacher, and continued so for upwards of seven years. He then procured ordination, and got a living in the established Church. The report appeared in a short time to be well founded. Mr. Hampson intended to have published these Memoirs in Mr. Wesley's life time, as his preface sets forth.

ing, published the following caution in the newspapers.

“The Executors of the late Rev. John Wesley, think it necessary to caution his numerous friends and the public, against receiving any spurious or hasty accounts of his life ; as three gentlemen, to whom he has bequeathed his Manuscripts and other valuable papers, will publish an authentic narrative as soon as it can be prepared for the press.”

Two of these gentlemen viz. Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, were absent from London, and fully engaged in the work as Itinerants. Dr. Whitehead\* resided in London, and at that time acted as a Local Preacher, under the direction of Mr. Rogers, the Superintendant. He was much esteemed by all the parties, and was therefore with the consent of all, appointed to compile the “Narrative,” Mr. Wesley’s papers, at the Doctor’s earnest request, were also delivered into his care by Mr. Rogers, with the consent of Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, that he might select at his leisure what was needful for the work ; the whole to be afterwards examined.—Dr. Whitehead proposed to Mr. Rogers, that he should have one hundred pounds for his trouble and loss of time ; which was fully agreed to, at a meeting of the Executors and the Printing Committee united ; only they determined, at the request of Mr. Rogers, that the Doctor

\* This gentleman had also been a Travelling Preacher for some years. He then, at his own request, was permitted by Mr. Wesley to go to Kingswood School to learn Latin and Greek. He afterwards studied physic, and joined the Society of Quakers. About three years before Mr. Wesley’s death, he again joined the Methodist Society, and was received by Mr. Wesley with his usual kindness.

Doctor should have one hundred *guineas*, as being a handsomer sum.—I have been the more particular in these transactions, as I shall have to speak of some facts, necessarily connected with them in the course of this history.

July 26, 1791, About a week after the above agreement, the Forty-eighth Conference assembled at Manchester, according to the appointment of the former year. There were present upwards of two hundred Travelling Preachers from various parts of the three kingdoms. Every person present seemed deeply sensible of the importance of the occasion. For more than Fifty years, Mr. Wesley had been, under God, the Father and Head of the whole connexion. And though far the greater part of the Societies had been formed by the labours of the Preachers, and many of them Mr. Wesley had never visited; yet having begun the work, and formed the rules by which the whole was governed: having by unwearied labour in travelling, preaching, and writing, for upwards of half a century, given to the whole work a consistency and order, which, under God, ensured its stability, he was justly considered a centre of union both to Preachers and people, and as having an Apostolic and Fatherly authority over the whole body. He still continued to visit the principal places every two years, and to preside at the Conferences.

Mr. William Thompson was chosen President, and Dr. Coke Secretary.—The Preachers had conversed together previously to the regular opening of the Conference, and were greatly strengthened and comforted by knowing each others mind, that they were determined to abide  
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in the good way in which they had been called, and to be followers of their deceased father as he had been of Christ: and the first business done when the Conference was opened, was the passing a unanimous resolution to that effect.

The following Minute was then prepared for insertion.

“It may be expected, that the Conference should make some observations on the death of Mr. Wesley, but they find themselves utterly inadequate to express their ideas and feelings on this awful and affecting event.

“Their souls do truly mourn for their great loss: and they trust they shall give the most substantial proofs of their veneration for the memory of their much esteemed Father and Friend, by endeavouring, though with great humility and diffidence, to follow and imitate him in doctrine, discipline, and life.”

Mr. Bradford, who used to travel with Mr. Wesley, then delivered the following letter to the President.

TO THE METHODIST CONFERENCE.

*Chester, April 7, 1785.*

“My Dear Brethren,

“Some of our Travelling Preachers have expressed a fear, that after my decease you would exclude them either from preaching in connexion with you, or from some other privileges which they now enjoy. I know no other way to prevent any such inconvenience, than to leave these my last words with you.

“I beseech you by the mercies of God, that you never avail yourselves of the Deed of Decla-



ration, to assume any superiority over your brethren: but let all things go on among those Itinerants who chuse to remain together, exactly in the same manner as when I was with you, so far as circumstances will permit.

“ In particular I beseech you, if you ever loved me, and if you now love God and your brethren, to have no respect of persons in stationing the Preachers, in chusing children for Kingswood School, in disposing of the Yearly contribution, and the Preacher's Fund, or any other public money. But do all things with a single eye, as I have done from the beginning. Go on thus, doing all things without prejudice or partiality, and God will be with you even to the end.

JOHN WESLEY.”

The Conference immediately and unanimously resolved, that all the Preachers who were in full connexion with them, should enjoy every privilege that the members of the Conference enjoy, agreeably to the above written letter of their venerable deceased Father in the Gospel, and consistent with the Deed of Declaration.

The three Executors of Mr. Wesley's WILL having come from London in order to confer with the Preachers respecting the books which Mr. Wesley had left, and the debt of one thousand six hundred pounds, with which they were encumbered, the Conference entered upon that business.

By the WILL, the Stock and the Copy-right of those Tracts which Mr. Wesley had published in the latter part of his life, (his Works had been published more than fourteen years, and to them no copy-right could be attached) were left in trust to

to the three Executors for the benefit of the fund already mentioned ; but by a very express clause which immediately followed, the Executors were to have nothing to do with the PRINTING, which was put into the hands of a Committee expressly named for that purpose. His Types, Presses, &c. were also left, not to the three Executors, but to two Preachers, *in trust for the use of the Conference.*—By the DEED which Mr. Wesley had executed after the WILL, the Stock and the Copy-right of all the books and tracts which Mr. Wesley had published, or might publish during the remainder of his life, were given to seven Trustees therein named, for the same purpose as that mentioned in the Will ; with this difference, that whereas in the Will the profits were directed to be applied to the *carrying on the work of God by Itinerant Preachers*, (a very general description, and which would give great latitude in the application) in the DEED it was expressly declared, that the profits should be applied to the above use, *according to the Deed of Declaration*, respecting the CONFERENCE, *which Mr. Wesley had filed in Chancery in the year 1784.* The seven Trustees were also ordered and empowered to pay all such debts as he should owe at the time of his death, and any legacies or annuities which he should bequeath by his WILL. From all these particulars, the Preachers assembled had no doubt that the printing, the distribution of the books, and the application of the profits, were designed by Mr. Wesley, to be as heretofore, under the direction of the Conference.

The Preachers from these considerations being perfectly satisfied of Mr. Wesley's design respecting his property ; and the seven Trustees  
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of the DEED having declared, that they were willing and desirous that every thing should go on as heretofore under the direction of the Conference ; they proceeded to consider what should be done respecting the debt of one thousand six hundred pounds, to which the property was liable, and for which the Trustees of the DEED, and the Executors of the WILL were both responsible ; and they came unanimously to the following resolution, viz. to borrow the one thousand six hundred pounds, and pay the debt immediately, as being most for the honour of their deceased Father ; and to do their utmost in their several Circuits to dispose of the Stock that this money might be repaid, and the surplus used according to the design of the Testator, in the support of the Gospel in the poor Circuits.

They next considered how they should behave towards the three Executors of Mr. Wesley's WILL. The Conference were sensible that they were very respectable men, and that *they* as well as the Trustees of the DEED, had a right to be satisfied, that the property Mr. Wesley had left, and to which they had administered, should be used according to the design of the Testator. It was therefore proposed, that the three Executors should be incorporated with the Preachers in order that they might be present at the Conferences when this money should be disposed of ; and that they should be members of the Committee in London, for the regulation of the press, and the examination of the accompts. This proposal was also agreed to, without a dissenting voice.

The three Executors were then introduced ; and the President informed them of the resolutions,

tions which the Conference had passed respecting them and the property to which they had administered, adding, "We think this will be a safe and effectual way to fulfill the design of the Testator," The Executors replied, That in their opinion, their authority was to continue over the property, for the benefit of the Conference, as long as they should live; and therefore they could not comply with the proposal. The President replied, that certainly their authority could only extend to the property which Mr. Wesley died possessed of; that it could not extend to what might arise out of it by means of the Preachers. The Executors answered, that they would maturely consider what had been proposed, and then give an answer.

The next morning the three gentlemen attended, and delivered the following paper:

"Having maturely considered the situation in which we stand, as Executors to Mr. Wesley, and Trustees of his property, for the use of the Conference, after payment of his debts and legacies, and being sworn in the Ecclesiastical Court faithfully to execute his Will, it is our opinion, that we cannot legally or conscientiously divest ourselves of the trust reposed in us, or extend its administration beyond the designs of the Testator. We are fully sensible that the Conference have it in their power to render the property of small value; but we trust they will not come to any resolution of that kind, as whatever it may produce will be solely at their disposal, and we wish to afford them every assistance and support in our power toward carrying on the work of God agreeably to Mr. Wesley's design."

When



When this paper was read, one of the Preachers observed, "That he could not think that it was Mr. Wesley's design, that they (the Executors) should have the management of the property in the *exclusive* way then claimed; as he had executed a DEED which had placed that authority in the hands of Seven Persons, members of the Conference." One of the Executors immediately replied, "That they had taken advice respecting that DEED, and were informed that it was good for nothing;—and that *any claim on that ground would be resisted.*" The President then informed the three gentlemen that the Preachers were determined to give up the whole property if the Executors persisted in their refusal of the union proposed to them by the Conference, as they were certain the Testator's design could in no other way be fulfilled. Upon this, further time for consideration was desired by the Executors, who the next morning delivered the following note :

"To meet the wishes of the Conference we are willing *wholly* to give up our trust to them\* after discharging the debts and legacies, *provided we can do it legally.* In order therefore conscientiously to divest ourselves of the charge, we will without delay, take the opinion of the King's Advocate, and one other eminent Doctor of Civil Law; whether it can be done: and if so, what will be the proper mode to be adopted. The case we are willing to submit to your own statement."

This proposal was maturely considered by the Conference, who were fully satisfied that Mr. Wesley

\* This the Conference did not "wish," as is plain from their proposals to the Executors.

Wesley intended, as was clear even from the WILL alone, that the printing, and the disposal of the books should be under the direction of the Conference; and that the utmost the Executors could reasonably demand was, to see that the profits were disposed of according to the design of the Testator. This the UNION of the Executors with the Conference fully secured. The *exclusive* management contended for, was in itself totally impracticable, and also plainly contrary to the design of the deceased: it appeared also to the Preachers, notwithstanding their conviction of the uprightness of the three gentlemen, to be highly unreasonable. To seem therefore, while thus impressed, to consent to its being referred to legal opinion, whether they should submit to act in the way proposed, when they were determined not to submit, would be insincerity. For as it was a question that rested with themselves, they were determined to give up the legacy (which certainly any Legatees may do) rather than submit to a demand which they saw would destroy their unanimity, and impede their usefulness. Beside, the delay of a year, (before which period the Conference could not again assemble,) would be attended with great inconvenience. They therefore resolved to give up at once to the three Executors, *all that the law could possibly give them*; thus avoiding, as most becoming their character, all further contention whether legal or otherwise.— The following answer was sent the same day to the three gentlemen.

“The Conference beg leave to return the following answer to the Executors of the late Rev. Mr. Wesley’s WILL, as containing their ultimate resolutions,

resolutions, in respect to the business between them and the Executors.

I. They return the Executors their sincere thanks for the trouble which they have taken in coming down from London to Manchester on the business of their office.

II. They inform the Executors that they resign all their claim and right to the whole stock of books and pamphlets of which Mr. Wesley was possessed at the time of his death, into the hands of them, the Executors.

III. They will purchase the above-mentioned stock of the Executors, (if the Executors please) at any time between this and the first of September next, paying to the Executors such a sum of money as will be sufficient to enable them to discharge every obligation which may then lie upon them on account of Mr. Wesley's Will."

Thus ended this painful business for that time. It is not easy to arrive at any clear or certain conclusions concerning the motives which induced these good men to refuse the proposal of acting in *union* with the Preachers, and to insist upon an exclusive management. The opinion of their Lawyer, that the DEED was *informal*, and therefore *void*, no doubt induced them to suppose, that such a management belonged to them of right. Yet it is hard to say how they could imagine this, when even the WILL itself expressly excludes them from having any thing to do with printing, and gives the whole superintendence in that line to a Committee of Preachers expressly named, of which Committee the Executors were not even to be members. The Conference certainly offered them more than the WILL gave them. Had they accepted the proposal, the accòmpts, and  
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even the printing, not only of any of Mr. Wesley's books, but of all *new* books, (with which, as Executors of Mr. Wesley, they could, of right, have nothing to do,) together with the disposal of the profits, would all have been under their inspection. This union I am convinced would have been attended with the happiest effects. These gentlemen however thought otherwise; and certainly they were justifiable in following their own judgment, as the Preachers were on their part, in chusing what appeared to them the most excellent way.

The Executors having departed\*, the Conference proceeded to settle the business of printing for the ensuing year. They appointed a Committee to superintend the accompts, to examine every thing which should be proposed to be printed at their Press during the year; and also empowered this Committee finally to settle with the three Executors at the expiration of the month given them to consider the proposal of the Conference.

The publishing a Life of Mr. Wesley was then considered, and several objections were made to Doctor Whitehead as the Biographer, chiefly on account of his known versatility, and the short time he had been in the connexion since his last

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admission.

\* Upon their return to London, the three Executors consulted the *Solicitor General*, (now Lord Eldon,) and the *King's Advocate*, concerning Mr. Wesley's *Will*, and also the *Deed*, and received their answer, *That the Deed was Testamentary; and that it superseded the Will, in respect to the books, copy-right, &c. being made subsequent to the Will.* The Executors hereupon informed the seven Trustees of the Deed of the opinion they had received. The Trustees immediately went to London, and took out letters of Administration accordingly.



admission. But Mr. Rogers entirely satisfied the Brethren on these points and the Doctor was authorised to compile the Life, and also appointed one of the Committee already mentioned, for examination and superintendence. The committee thus appointed consisted of the following persons: The Rev. Dr. Coke, the Rev. James Creighton, the Rev. Peard Dickinson, Mr. James Rogers, Mr. Richard Rodda, Mr. George Whitfield, and Dr. Whitehead.

This business being settled, the Conference considered the state of the connexion at large. Considerable uneasiness had been manifested among the people from the time of Mr. Wesley's death, concerning that question which had often before been agitated: Some who were attached to what was called, *The Old Plan*, viz. a strict connexion with the National Church, printed circular Letters, strongly insisting on that Plan being adopted. This, as might be easily foreseen, provoked replies from those who in several places wished to have the plan so extended, as to comprehend every *scriptural* privilege. Thus a dispute was revived, which continued for four years, and was productive of great uneasiness to the Preachers.

The Letters above-mentioned occasioned the following minute.

Q. Is it necessary to enter into any engagement in respect to our future plan of Economy:—  
A. We engage to follow strictly the plan which Mr. Wesley left us.—This answer was variously interpreted, according to the wishes of the two parties already mentioned. Hence the dispute became more warm. But the Conference could not be more explicit, as they saw it was impossible

ble at that time to satisfy those who thus contended.

Many fears having been expressed, that after Mr. Wesley's death the Preachers would cease to travel; to remove these, the following Minute was made.

2. Are any directions necessary concerning the stationing of the Preachers?—*A.* No Preacher shall be stationed for any Circuit above two years successively, unless God has been pleased to use him as the instrument of a remarkable revival.

The Conference being sorely pressed to provide for the families of the Preachers; to avoid an undue increase of this burden, the following Minute was adopted.

2. Whereas we have been disappointed by married Preachers coming out to travel in expectation of being themselves able to maintain their Wives independantly of the connexion, who very soon became entirely dependant on it: how shall this be prevented in future:—*A.* Let no Preacher be received on this plan, unless he can bring in writing such an account of his income, signed by his Superintendant, as shall satisfy the Conference. 2. If any person shall propose to keep a Preacher's wife or children, he shall give a Bond to the Conference for the sum he is to allow.

To oppose a great and encreasing evil, the following rule was made.

2. Have we not made too great advances towards conformity to the world?—*A.* We fear we have.

2. How shall we prevent this?—*A.* 1. Those school-masters and school-mistresses who receive dancing-masters into their schools, and those parents who employ dancing-masters for their children,

oren, shall be no longer members of our Societies. 2. Let every Superintendant read the "Thoughts on Dress," once a year, in all his Societies.

*France* appeared on the Minutes of the Conference this year! A change that was favourable to religious liberty, having taken place two years before in the Government of that country, *William Mahy*, a native of the Island of Guernsey, was sent into Normandy and Brittany, to preach the Gospel to the inhabitants. He had considerable success, and his name appeared for *France* in the Minutes for 1792. But the war which broke out between this Country and France in the beginning of 1793, and the revolutionary Government, with the horrors that followed in that *distracted Nation*, rendered his mission nearly abortive.

To supply the want of Mr. Wesley's Superintendence, Local Authorities were instituted. The Circuits were formed into Districts. There were not less than three, nor more than eight Circuits in a District; in general there were five. England was divided into Seventeen Districts, Ireland into Five, Scotland into Two, and Wales formed One.

The Districts have authority, 1. To try and *suspend* Preachers who are found immoral, erroneous in doctrine, or deficient in abilities. 2. To decide concerning the building of Chapels. 3. To examine the demands from the Circuits respecting the support of the Preachers, and of their families. 4. To elect a Representative to attend and form a Committee four days before the meeting of the Conference, in order to prepare a Draft of the Stations for the ensuing year. Three things  
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the district Assemblies cannot do. 1. They cannot *make* any rule. 2. They cannot *expel* a Preacher. 3. They cannot *station* the Preachers.—An appeal to the Conference is allowed in all cases.—At first it was ordered, that the Districts should elect their own Chairmen, but this was found to be inconvenient. It was therefore determined in the year 1796, that they should be elected in the Conference by ballot.

The business being ended the Conference broke up. Great was the comfort of the Preachers that such a foundation was laid for the peace and prosperity of the Societies. The Lord, they saw, was better to them than their boding fears. His servants were of one heart and of one mind. The voice of thanksgiving ascended up on high, and they departed to their several Circuits blessing and praising God.

July 31, 1792, The forty-ninth Conference began in London. Mr. Alexander Mather was elected President, and Dr. Coke Secretary.

The Preachers had no sooner assembled than they were involved in a dispute which had occasioned great uneasiness throughout the connexion in the preceding year.

It has been already observed, that at the former Conference, upon the representation of Mr. Rogers, the Superintendant of the London Circuit, and the other Members of the Committee who were appointed by Mr. Wesley's Will to manage the printing, the appointment of Dr. Whitehead to compile a Life of Mr. Wesley, was confirmed. The Doctor had already entered upon the work, and proposals had been printed by the Committee, and sent into the Circuits, that



the Preachers might procure subscriptions. Dr. Whitehead, however, soon after the Conference, to the astonishment of all concerned, declared his intention of publishing the Life as an *Independent Man*. He also declared that he would make such use of the Manuscripts of Mr. Wesley, with which he had been intrusted, as he *himself* should think proper; and that he would not suffer them to be examined, as Mr. Wesley had ordered in his Will, previously to the publication, unless the two other Trustees of these Manuscripts would enter into an engagement, that he should retain in his hands all those papers which *he* should judge to be necessary for the work. He insisted also that the copy-right of the book should belong to him; and that if it should be published from the book-room, he would have half the clear profits.

As the Doctor had engaged (see page 147,) to compile the Life for the Book-room, (*i. e.* for the charity to which Mr. Wesley had bequeathed all his literary Property, the Committee expostulated with him on his unfaithfulness, and the extravagance of his new demands. Their expostulations were however in vain. They had acted with great simplicity towards the Doctor. Having a high opinion of his integrity and attachment to the cause in which they were all engaged, they had given all the necessary materials into his hands, and so were compleatly in his power. He was fully sensible of this advantage, and persevered in those demands with which he knew the Committee could not comply. This strange conduct occasioned great uneasiness, not only in the London Society, but throughout the whole connexion.

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When this uneasiness was at a considerable height, the seven Trustees of Mr. Wesley's Testamentary Deed, went to London to take out letters of Administration. Being informed of the dispute, they united their efforts to those of the Committee, to make peace, and in order thereto, they determined to sacrifice a considerable part of the income of the charity. Accordingly they consented to give Dr. Whitehead one half of the clear profits of the book for two years, provided the Manuscript should be approved by the Committee appointed to superintend the printing. To the first of these proposals the Doctor agreed, but he absolutely refused to comply with the latter: and as nothing great or small could be printed without such approbation, (which the Doctor well knew,) the Trustees were obliged at length, after some fruitless expostulation, to leave the Doctor to his own way.

A Life of Mr. Wesley had, however, been advertised from the book-room, and the connexion expected it. The Trustees therefore in conjunction with the Committee, appointed the two other Trustees of Mr. Wesley's Manuscripts, to compile a Life according to that first intention. The Work was accordingly undertaken and completed without any profit or emolument whatsoever to the parties. The whole edition, consisting of ten thousand copies, was sold in a few weeks, and a second edition published when the Conference assembled.

Doctor Whitehead was by this time not quite so sanguine concerning the Memoirs which he was writing, as when he rejected the proposals of the Committee. He addressed the Conference, and complained of the ill treatment which  
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he said he had received. The Conference answered, that before they could listen to any complaint from him, he must consent to an examination of Mr. Wesley's papers, according to his Will, as he could not appear before them as an upright man, till he should do so. They declared, that if he would consent to this, they would gladly hear any thing which he had to say in his own defence, or any accusation which he should bring against any members of their body who had opposed him.

This reply produced the proposals which the Doctor has printed in the advertisement prefixed to his Memoirs : they consist of three parts. In the first the Doctor proposes an examination of the Manuscripts. In the second, that the Conference should take his Life of Mr. Wesley, (of which there was at that time 128 pages printed) off his hands, upon some conditions therein mentioned. And in the third, that he should be restored to his place as a Local Preacher.

As the Conference could not suppose that Dr. Whitehead had any serious expectation that they would have any thing to do with the Life of their honoured Father which he was writing ; and as his restoration as a Preacher, must depend (as long as any upright discipline should remain) upon his faithfully acting according to Mr. Wesley's Will, as a Trustee of his papers ; the Conference in considering the Doctor's proposals, in the first instance, only attended to *that* particular. The following was the Doctor's final proposal upon this leading point.

“ All the Manuscripts of Mr. Wesley, shall be *fairly* and *impartially* examined by Dr. Coke, Mr. Moore, and Dr. Whitehead. Such papers  
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as they shall *unanimously* deem unfit for publication, shall be burned immediately. Out of the remainder, Dr. Whitehead shall be at liberty to select such as he thinks necessary for his Work; and the remainder to be given into the hands of Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore."

Such was the Doctor's proposal, even in this stage of the business! After many declarations that he was willing, and had often proposed to enter into an examination of Mr. Wesley's papers, at length it fully appeared *what kind of examination* he would consent to, viz. *That his single negative should preserve any paper from destruction; and his single affirmative enable him to use any paper in such a way as he himself should think proper*: And this the Doctor called a *fair and impartial examination*!

As there could be no hesitation among upright men upon such a proposal as this, a reply was immediately sent, signed by the President and Secretary, pointing out the injustice and total want of ingeniousness, as well as the unfaithfulness to the deceased, which was manifest in the proposal respecting the examination of the Manuscripts; and again declaring, in substance, that while he refused to fulfil his duty uprightly, as a Trustee of Mr. Wesley's papers, they could have nothing to do with him in any other character. To this the Conference received no answer.

The Conference were thus obliged, as the Committee had been before, to leave the Doctor to pursue his own way, contenting themselves with bearing their testimony against an evil which they could not prevent. The Will of Mr. Wesley was thus violated in a point which has been always considered by eminent men, with peculiar solicitude;



solicitude; and concerning which they expect the most sacred fidelity from their surviving Friends. But *God will bring every work into judgment.*

In the *Life of Mr. Wesley*, written by Dr. Coke and Mr. Moore, no mention was made of this unhappy dispute, nor even a hint given of it. The writers were satisfied that it was known, though but very imperfectly, to the Methodist connexion. They spared the Doctor with the *Public*; and it were to be wished that he had followed their example, and so have ultimately spared himself. But it is an old and a true remark,

“Forgiveness to the injured does belong,

“He never pardons who commits the wrong.”

He accordingly pursued the direct contrary course, and in the *Memoirs* which he published, concealing the facts which I have now stated, he represented those who contended with him, as having persecuted him with the most malignant spirit, and in the most illiberal manner, merely because he would write an impartial *Life of Mr. Wesley*! In so plain a case however, it is quite sufficient to state the facts, (as I have thought it my duty thus to do :) the unprejudiced Reader may draw his own conclusions.

The Conference proceeded.—It was enquired,

2. What regulations shall be made concerning the office of the President of the Conference?  
—A. 1. The same Person is not to be re-chosen above once in eight years. 2. The President's power shall cease as soon as the Conference breaks up. This latter rule is contrary even to the

the *letter* of the Deed inrolled in Chancery, which says, "The Conference shall chuse a President, who shall continue such until the election of another President in the next or other subsequent Conference." In the year 1793, it was added, "That no person should vote by proxy, at the election of a President."

As there was great uneasiness in the nation, through seditious publications, the Conference unanimously adopted the following Minute.

2. What directions shall be given concerning our conduct to the Civil Government?—*A.*

1. None of us shall, either in writing or conversation, speak lightly or irreverently of the Government under which he lives. 2. We are to observe, that the Oracles of God command us to be *subject to the higher powers*: and that *honour to the King* is there connected with *the fear of God*.

The uneasiness respecting the Ordinances increased throughout the connexion. Mr. Wesley having been used to administer the Lord's supper to the Societies in his annual visits, the loss of this privilege was an additional inducement to those who contended for the more liberal plan. Many Petitions were presented on that side; while several Addresses, from persons of considerable weight, insisted that the privilege should not be granted. The Preachers also were divided in sentiment on the subject. But they loved each other; and they knew it was a question concerning which they might innocently differ, and that therefore even the thought of division or separation on account of it, should be abhorred. For sometime they knew not what to do. They were sensible that either to *allow* or *refuse* the

the privilege would greatly increase the uneasiness, and perhaps cause a division. At length it was proposed to decide the question for that year (for they did not dare to go further) by *Lot*. This they knew was allowed, and even recommended in Scripture in difficult cases. The *Lot* decided that *the sacrament should not be administered in the Societies for that year*. This was made known to the people in an Address, wherein they were exhorted to live in peace, and to love one another, notwithstanding this difference of sentiment. This was the first instance of the Conference addressing the people. Since that time it has been frequently done, and been followed with good effects.

Some irregularities respecting Ordination, having given offence in the preceding year, to prevent the like in future, the following Minute was adopted.

2. What rules shall be made concerning Ordination?—*A.* 1. No Ordination shall take place in the Methodist connexion without the consent of the Conference previously obtained. 2. If any Brother shall break the above-mentioned Rule, by Ordaining or being Ordained, without the consent of the Conference previously obtained, the Brother so breaking the rule, does thereby exclude himself.

The Rules of the Preacher's Fund (see p. 81,) were considered, enlarged, and materially altered. At its first institution, none were to have any claim upon it, but those who should need it. But now the Preachers subscriptions were raised from half a guinea a year to a guinea, and the Preachers, when superannuated, were to have twenty shillings a year for every year they had travelled. Their

Their Widows also were to have a yearly allowance according to the same rule, viz. the years which their Husbands had been engaged in the work.

Had the Fund been supported entirely by the subscriptions of the Preachers, it is probable this change in the Rules would have been unnoticed. But many of the people contributed to it, with the sole view of rendering their worn-out Preachers comfortable in their old age. Many persons were therefore much grieved on account of these Rules, and some who were Enemies took much pains to increase the offence.

After considerable uneasiness the Conference re-considered the rules in the year 1796, and added a clause, declaring that they would not see a Brother (or his Widow) in distress, supposing that the years he had travelled did not entitle him to an adequate support from the Fund; but that they would in that case shew him *mercy*.

But still this did not give satisfaction. The *right* of such to what they should *really need* was unquestionable. Therefore at the Conference in 1799, the subject was fully considered, and brought to the following equitable conclusion.

2. Are there any regulations to be made in respect to the Preacher's Fund?—*A.* The subscriptions of the Travelling Preachers shall in future be considered as separate from the subscriptions of the People; and the subscriptions of the People shall be considered as forming a Fund of Charity, which is to be applied *only* to the assistance of real objects of mercy among the Supernumerary and Superannuated Preachers, and the Widows of Preachers: nevertheless, those who have hitherto received allowances from the Fund, shall continue to receive them, not-

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withstanding this regulation as a retrospective law would be unjust. The subscriptions of the Preachers, being their own money, subscribed in general with great difficulty, out of their little-pittance, shall be distributed among the Supernumerary and Superannuated Preachers, and Widows, according to strict, and impartial rules of justice. — Rules were accordingly made for that purpose; and it was agreed, that the Fund should be Legalized according to Act of Parliament. This regulation seems to give universal satisfaction.

A short time before the Conference assembled this year, the Rev. John Richardson departed this life. The following account was given of him in the Minutes.

“ Like his great Master, he was a *man of sorrows, and acquainted with grief*. The uniformity of his life; the Christian simplicity of his manners, the meekness of his spirit, and the unction which attended his Ministry for twenty-nine years in the City of London, will be ever remembered by many hundreds, with gratitude, to the God of all grace. After labouring under a severe Asthma for twenty-six years, he died in the fifty-eighth year of his age. The last words he uttered, just before he expired, were *God is always with me.*” He served Mr. Wesley as his Curate in London, on which account his name was not always mentioned in the Minutes of the Conference. He read the Funeral service over Mr. Wesley, and was soon after buried in the same grave with him.

This Conference having sat nearly three weeks closed in the following manner.

2. What shall we do more to promote the work of God?—A. We do, at this solemn hour of

of the night (past ten o'clock on the 15th of August) devote ourselves to the service of Almighty God, in a more unreserved and entire manner than ever we have hitherto done; and are all determined to spend and be spent in his blessed work. And this our solemn dedication of ourselves to God, we do unanimously signify by rising from our seats in the presence of the Lord!

July 29, 1793, The fiftieth Conference met at Leeds. Mr. John Pawson was chosen President, and Dr. Coke Secretary.

The agitation respecting the Ordinances was now so great that the Conference was obliged to come to a determination on the question. After a long discussion it was decided, by a very large majority, that *the Societies should have the privilege of the Lord's Supper where they unanimously desired it.*—Unanimity was required, that, if possible, division might be prevented. To avoid offence, it was at the same time resolved,  
 1. That no Gowns, Cassocks, Bands, or Surplices, should be worn by any of our Preachers.  
 2. That the Title of *Reverend* should not be used by them towards each other in Future. 3. That the distinction between ordained and unordained Preachers should be dropped.—This latter Rule, although certainly made with a good intention, yet appears to be a violation of Order, and a departure from Mr. Wesley's Plan.

The senior Brethren wishing to continue in the works as long as possible, the following rule was adopted.

2. What directions shall be given concerning Superannuated Preachers?—A. Every Preacher

shall be considered as a Supernumerary for four years after he has desisted from travelling, and shall afterwards be deemed Superannuated.

This Conference bore ample testimony to the piety and usefulness of Joseph Cownley, one of the old Preachers, who died in the preceding year. His Life was afterwards wrote in a very pleasing manner by Mr. John Gualtier, and is published in the *Arminian Magazine*, for 1794.

## CHAPTER THE EIGHTH.

*From the Conference in 1794, to the end of the Conference in 1799.*

**J**ULY 28, 1794, The fifty-first Conference was held in Bristol. Mr. Thomas Hanby was elected President, and Dr. Coke Secretary.

The Societies in general had acquiesced in the determination of the last Conference. Many of them had availed themselves of the privilege allowed, while others continued to pursue in peace, the way which they had hitherto walked in. But in some places considerable uneasiness still prevailed. A number of Trustees from some of the principal Chapels, assembled at Bristol at the same time with the Preachers. They desired admission to the Conference, and presented an Address, expressive of their sentiments, respecting their own situation and privileges, and also respecting the administration of the Ordinances. When they retired, the Conference took their Address into consideration, and a negotiation commenced which ended in an agreement, in which some of the former Rules were confirmed, and the following added to them.

With regard to TRUSTEES, The Trustees in conjunction with the Superintendant Preacher, (who shall have one vote only) shall choose their



own Stewards, who shall receive and disburse all seat-rents, and such collections as shall be made for the purpose of paying interest for money, due upon the premises, or for reducing the principal, provided also that his books shall be always open for the inspection of the Superintendant, and audited in his presence once every year, or oftener if required. Provided always that when the necessities of the work of God require it, the Trustees shall allow quarterly, what may appear requisite for carrying on the work, so that it be not cramped. Provided, that if the seat-rents and collections fall short of what will be sufficient to discharge the rents, interest of money, and other necessary expences of the Chapels, the deficiency shall be made good out of some other revenue of the Society. Provided also, that nothing in these Resolutions shall be construed to extend or alter any of the powers contained in the Trust Deeds.

That the Trustees may have the fullest assurance that the Conference love them, and have not the shadow of a desire to oppress them, any more than to reject any proposals which they conceive calculated to restore and preserve peace and harmony\*, the following articles are added.

1. No Trustee however accused, or defective in conforming to the established rules, shall be removed from the Society, unless his crime, or breach of the Rules of the Society, be proved in the presence of the Trustees and Leaders.

2. If any Preacher be accused of immorality, a meeting shall be called of all the Preachers, Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders of the Circuit, in which the accused Preacher labours: and if the charge be proved to the satisfaction of the majority

\* The Address of the Trustees suggested a fear of this kind.

majority of such meeting, the Chairman of the District, in which that Circuit is situated, shall remove the convicted Preacher from the Circuit on the request of the majority of the meeting: nevertheless, an appeal on either side to the Conference, shall remain.

By this agreement the authority of the Trustees, as such, was fully acknowledged; and it satisfied those who did not wish to be considered as *Proprietors*

The Sacrament was at this Conference granted to ninety three places in England, the names of which were printed in the Minutes.

The Nation being still uneasy through political discussions, the Conference unanimously adopted the following caution.

2. Is it necessary to make any observations on the present important crisis of public affairs?—  
*A.* We most affectionately intreat all our Brethren, in the name of God, to *honour the King*. Let us daily pray for our Rulers, and *submit ourselves to every ordinance of Man for the Lord's sake*.

The year that followed this Conference was a time of great uneasiness. The Trustees of that Chapel in Bristol, which has been already mentioned as the first which Mr. Wesley built, (see p. 7,) were exceedingly averse to the Ordinances being allowed to the Societies. They had laboured in this cause a considerable time, and seemed much dissatisfied that more liberal views should prevail.—The Conference having, at their late sitting, granted to ninety-three places, the privilege of having the ordinances of God in that way which they desired, convinced those Trustees, that their labour had hitherto been in vain, and they determined

determined on a more decisive opposition; and to risk all consequences rather than allow the liberty contended for.

An opportunity of fully declaring themselves now offered. The Lord's Supper had been administered, during the Conference, at a Chapel in the suburbs, in which some of the Preachers had assisted. This was repeated on the day after the Conference broke up. One of the Preachers who thus assisted had been appointed for the Bristol Circuit, for the ensuing year; but two days after his appointment, he was served with an Attorneys letter, signed by the Trustees of the old Chapel, charging him *at his peril not to trespass on their Premises*, assigning no reason but that *they had not appointed him to preach therein*, and that *no other persons had any authority so to do*. Thus the blow was struck, and a Precedent formed, which if submitted to, would have subjected every Preacher in the connexion, to a similar exclusion, in this summary way, by the separate authority of a few men, without a charge preferred or trial of any kind, and even contrary, as in this instance, to the judgment, and wishes, both of the Society and Circuit.

But happily for the Unity of the Body, this decisive measure, met with a resistance as prompt, and as decisive. Almost the whole Society withdrew from the Chapel from which their Preacher was thus excluded; and without contending the question of right, they immediately proceeded to erect another Chapel. They also appealed to their Brethren at large, declaring, that the steps they had taken was not only to vindicate their own just rights, but also those of the whole Community

Community. "This act, (said they) left us no room for hesitation. To remain in passive submission to those who could thus, confiding in their *Legal Powers*, place themselves beyond the reach of all *Christian* rules, and especially of those upon which our happy religious fellowship is founded, we are certain could not be the will of the Lord concerning us."

The event fully justified this conclusion. Their opponents however had many Friends throughout the connexion, and these spared no pains during the year, to defend what had been done, and to insure its success.

July 27, 1795: The fifty-second Conference assembled at Manchester. Mr. Joseph Bradford was chosen President, and Dr. Coke Secretary.

As the connexion had been so greatly agitated, it was agreed that the first day should be spent in fasting and prayer, that God would shew us mercy, and grant wisdom from above to direct us how we might yet keep the unity of the spirit in the bond of peace. We did not ask in vain. Several of the Trustees, and other persons, who had assembled from various parts on account of the dispute, joined with the Preachers in their addresses to the Throne of Grace, and partook with them of the Lord's Supper, which concluded the service of the day.

The next morning the Conference chose a Committee of nine Preachers, by ballot, to draw up a plan of Pacification, to be presented to the Brethren who differed from them on the subjects in question. The plan was soon compleated, and having obtained the unanimous approbation of the Conference, it was presented to the meeting



ing of Trustees, and with a few additions proposed by them, and acceded to by the Conference, it was accepted by a large Majority. Being then fully confirmed by the Conference, this happy bond of union was made known to the Societies, prefaced by a suitable Address, and signed by the President and Secretary. Since that time the connexion has enjoyed peace respecting the Ordinances.

#### THE PLAN OF PACIFICATION.

##### *I. Concerning Public Worship.*

1. The sacrament of the Lord's Supper shall not be administered in any Chapel, nor Baptism administered, nor the dead buried, nor service in Church hours, except the majority of the Trustees of that Chapel on the one hand, and the majority of the Stewards and Leaders belonging to that Chapel (as best qualified to give the sense of the people) on the other hand, allow of it. Nevertheless, in all cases the consent of the Conference shall be obtained, before any of these things be introduced.—It was also added, That these majorities must testify in writing to the Conference, that they are persuaded no separation will be made thereby.

2. Where there is a Society but no Chapel, if the Society desire any or all of these things, the Stewards and Leaders of that Society must attend to the same rule.

3. Where the Lord's Supper has been already peaceably administered, the administration of it shall be continued in future.

4. Wherever the Lord's Supper shall be administered according to the fore-mentioned regulations,

regulations, it shall always be continued, except the Conference order the contrary.

5. The Lord's Supper shall be administered by those only who are authorised by the Conference: and at such times and in such manner only, as the Conference shall appoint.

6. The administration of Baptism and the Lord's Supper, according to the above regulations, is intended only for the members of our own Society.

7. We agree, that the Lord's Supper be administered among us, on Sunday evenings only: except where the majority of the Stewards and Leaders desire it in Church hours; or where it has already been administered in those hours. Nevertheless, it shall never be administered on those Sundays on which it is administered in the parochial Church.

8. The Lord's Supper shall be always administered in England according to the form of the Established Church: but the person who administers, shall have full liberty to give out hymns, and to use exhortation and extemporary prayer.

9. Wherever Divine Service is performed in England on the Lord's day in Church hours, the officiating Preacher shall read either the service of the Established Church, our venerable Father's abridgement, or at least the Lessons appointed by the Calendar. But we recommend either the full service, or the abridgment.

## II. *Concerning Discipline.*

1. The appointment of Preachers shall remain solely with the Conference; and no Trustee, or number of Trustees shall expel or exclude from their Chapels, any Preacher so appointed.

2. Nevertheless,

2. Nevertheless, if the majority of the Trustees, or the majority of the Stewards and Leaders of any Society, believe that any Preacher appointed for their Circuit, is immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities, or that he has broken any of the Rules above-mentioned, they shall have authority to summon the Preachers of the District; and all the Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders of the Circuit, to meet in their Chapel on a day and hour appointed. (sufficient time being given.) The Chairman of the District shall be the President of the assembly; and every Preacher, Trustee, Steward and Leader, shall have a single vote, the Chairman possessing also the casting voice. And if the majority of the meeting judge that the accused Preacher is immoral, erroneous in doctrine, deficient in abilities, or has broken any of the Rules above-mentioned, he shall be considered as removed from that Circuit; and the District Committee shall, as soon as possible, appoint another Preacher for that Circuit, instead of the Preacher so removed; and shall determine among themselves how the removed Preacher shall be disposed of till the Conference, and shall have authority to suspend the said Preacher from all public duties till the Conference, if they judge proper. The District Committee shall also supply as well as possible, the place of the removed Preacher, till another Preacher be appointed. And the Preacher thus appointed, and all other Preachers, shall be subject to the above mode of trial. And if the District Committee do not appoint a Preacher for that Circuit, instead of the removed Preacher, within a month after the aforesaid removal, or do not fill up the place of the removed Preacher, till another Preacher be appointed,

appointed, the majority of the said Trustees, Stewards, and Leaders, being again regularly summoned, shall appoint a Preacher for the said Circuit, provided he be a member of the Methodist connexion, till the ensuing Conference.

3. If any Preacher refuse to submit to the above mode of trial, in any of the cases mentioned above, he shall be considered as suspended till the Conference. And if any Trustees expel from any chapel a Preacher, by their own *separate* authority, the Preachers appointed for that Circuit, shall not preach in that Chapel till the ensuing Conference, or till a trial takes place according to the mode mentioned above.

4. If any Trustees expel or exclude a Preacher by their own *separate* authority, from any Chapel in any Circuit, the Chairman of the District shall summon the members of the District Committee, the Trustees of that Circuit who have not offended, and the Stewards and Leaders of the Circuit. And the Members of such assembly shall examine into the evidence on both sides; and if the majority of them determine, that the state of the Society in which the exclusion took place, requires that a new Chapel should be built previous to the meeting of the Conference, every proper step shall be immediately taken for erecting such Chapel. And no step shall on any account be taken to erect a Chapel for *such* purpose, before the meeting of the Conference, till such meeting be summoned, and such determination be made.

5. No Preacher shall be suspended, or removed from his Circuit, by any District Committee, except he have the privilege of the trial before-mentioned.

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6. The hundred Preachers mentioned in the enrolled Deed, and their successors, are the only *legal* persons, who constitute the Conference: and we think the junior brethren have no reason to object to this proposition, as they are regularly elected according to seniority.

7. If a Travelling Preacher, Local Preacher, Steward or Leader, shall disturb the peace of the Society by speaking for or against the introduction of the Lord's supper in our Societies, or concerning the old or new Plan, so called, he or they, shall be subject to the trial and penalties before-mentioned.

8. We all agree the pulpit shall not be a vehicle of abuse.

9. Nothing contained in these rules, shall be construed to violate the rights of the Trustees, as expressed in their respective Deeds.

It was agreed at this Conference, that no Preacher be required to administer the Sacrament against his own approbation: and should it be granted to any place, where the Preachers of the Circuit are all unwilling to administer it, the Superintendant shall in that case invite a neighbouring Preacher who is properly qualified to administer it.

When we consider the union of the Methodist Societies with the Established Church, and yet that they are open to all those of every denomination who fear God and keep his commandments, the necessity of such a Plan will appear. For, if there had been a general allowance of the ordinances every where, many of the Societies would have separated. If on the other hand, they were not allowed in any place, the same evil would have followed.

followed. The Plan adopted at this time preserved the body together, and laid a foundation for lasting peace.

After strongly recommending the sanctification of the Sabbath, and prohibiting the use of tobacco among the Preachers, in any shape or way, unless in cases of absolute necessity, the Conference concluded with the following declaration.

“ In order that all the Preachers may be perfectly easy respecting our form of Government, it is agreed, that no change shall be made in this, unless first proposed and agreed to in full Conference.”

July 25, 1796, The Fifty-third Conference was held in London. Mr. Thomas Taylor was chosen President, and Dr. Coke Secretary.

The plan of Pacification had satisfied all the moderate people, who only desired scriptural and rational liberty. But there was a Party who were not satisfied with this, but remained still contentious. A young man named *Alexander Kilham*, (who had been admitted upon trial as a Preacher, in the year 1785) became the champion of this party, and occasioned great uneasiness by various pamphlets which he published. He had not only unhappily imbibed the levelling Doctrines which were common in that day, but had even strangely applied them to Religion, and the order of the Church of Christ. He insisted that the People were held in gross bondage. That they ought to rise up and deliver themselves, and assume that power which of right belonged to them.—That the Preachers were merely their Servants, and ought to be obedient to their will: and every

thing contrary to this wild unscriptural Theory, he termed Popery and Priestcraft! He also traduced the character of the Preachers in the vilest manner. The Party whose cause he espoused, supported and abetted him by every means in their power, so that the Societies in several places were rent in pieces in the dispute. When the Conference assembled, he was *unanimously* expelled the connexion. The Minutes of the Trial were published, and every Preacher signed his name to a paper, testifying his approbation of the sentence. (This was the only instance of that kind) He afterwards used all his influence from the pulpits of the Dissenters to which he had access, and also from the press, to bring the Preachers into disrepute, not only with the Methodists, but with the Nation at large. But he failed of his object, and on December 20, 1798, while employed in his revolutionary schemes, he was called into Eternity at Nottingham, after a few days illness occasioned by a bone sticking in his throat!

Several rules were made at this time in order to prevent too great a number of the Preachers from attending the Conference. This inconvenience was occasioned, 1. By the Minute that was made at the first Conference after Mr. Wesley's death, which granted to all the brethren in full connexion the same privileges as the *Hundred*, except where it should be found inconsistent with the Deed of Declaration. 2. The unsettled state of the connexion owing to the disputes respecting the Ordinances. These begat, 3. A want of confidence, between those who differed concerning these things. But as these contentions no longer exist, the evils which arose out of them have nearly subsided. Shortly we may

may hope there will be no trace of them remaining.

July 31, 1797, The Fifty-fourth Conference was held in Leeds. Dr. Coke was chosen President, and Mr. Samuel Bradburn Secretary.

From the time of the preceding Conference, the connexion was in a very uneasy state, through the incessant labours of the disaffected Party already mentioned, to disturb the people, and make their minds evil affected towards the Preachers. Being irritated by the expulsion of their Partizan, *Mr. Kilham*, and having no hope of being permitted to rule in the connexion (through the old pretence of *vindicating the rights of the People*,) they laboured incessantly to bring about a division; and they determined that it should be as considerable as Calumny, and the popular cry of *Liberty*, could make it. Among other things, they asserted in various publications, that the Preachers were really divided in sentiment, and that a considerable number were of *Mr. Kilham's* judgment, only they wanted his courage to declare it. Therefore, when the brethren met this, the first thing they did was to draw up, and sign the following declaration.

“Whereas we the undersigned have on this and the preceeding day, carefully revised the rules drawn up and left us by our late venerable Father in the Gospel, the Rev. Mr. Wesley, which were published by him in our large Minutes, to which we consented when we were admitted, and by which we were regulated during his life: and whereas we have collected together those Rules which we believe to be essential to the existence



of Methodism, as well as others to which we have no objection ; we do now *voluntarily* and in *good faith*, sign our names, as approving of, and engaging to comply with the aforesaid collection of rules, or code of laws, God being our helper."—One hundred and forty-five of the brethren, signed their names to this declaration. This has been followed with the best effects.

Two only of the Travelling Preachers, who were present, *William Thom*, and *Stephen Eversfield*, refused to sign the declaration, and separated from their Brethren. A third, *Alexander Cummin*, signified his dissent by letter. They joined *Alexander Kilham*, and made a Schism under the name of "The new Itinerancy."—It is an awful thing to disturb and divide communities of real Christians, (and especially those by whose instrumentality we have been brought to the knowledge of God,) upon points of doubtful disputation ! Had Mr. Wesley and his Helpers acted thus, their labours would not have been so owned of God, and their zeal would have proved a curse rather than a blessing to the world.—This great evil has however, in this case, been attended with good consequences to the connexion, as it has carried away some persons who had been very troublesome in the Societies for several years.

The Conference being now convinced that a division must take place, determined to remove every possible pretext from those who sought occasion against them ; and to make every sacrifice which they could make, consistently with that cause of God and Religion intrusted to their care. The following letter will shew this determination in the clearest light.

*Leeds*

## TO THE METHODIST SOCIETIES.

*Leeds, August 7, 1797.**"Dear Brethren,*

" We think it our duty to inform you by the earliest opportunity, of the measures we have taken, in order to satisfy those of our brethren, who have been made more or less uneasy by sundry publications circulated through the Societies: and we trust, that on a serious consideration of the regulations we have agreed to at this Conference, you will see that the sacrifices in respect to authority, which we have made on the part of the whole body of Travelling Preachers, evidence our willingness to meet our brethren in every thing which is consistent with the existence of the Methodist Discipline, and our readiness to be their servants for Jesus's sake.

" I. In respect to finances, or money-matters.—We have determined, 1. To publish annually a very minute account of the disbursements or application of the Yearly collection: And, 2. A full account of the affairs of Kingswood School. 3. That all bills for the support of Travelling Preachers, and their families, in respect to deficiencies, house-rent, fire, candles, sickness, travelling expences, and all other matters of a temporal kind for their support, for which the Circuits cannot provide, shall first meet with the approbation of the Quarterly-meeting, and be signed by the general Steward of the Circuit, before they can be brought to the District-committee.

" II. In respect to all other temporal matters: It has been determined, 1. That no Circuits shall be divided, till such division has been approved

proved of by their respective Quarter-meetings, and signed by the general Stewards.

“ 2. That no other temporal matter shall be transacted by the District-committee, till the approbation of the respective Quarterly-meetings be first given, signed by the Circuit-stewards.

“ III. In respect to the receiving and excluding private members of the Society.

“ 1. The Leaders-meeting shall have a right to declare any person on trial, improper to be received into the Society : and after such declaration, the Superintendant shall not admit such person into the Society.

“ 2. No person shall be expelled from the Society for immorality, till such immorality be proved at a Leaders-meeting.

“ IV. In respect to the appointment and removal of Leaders, Stewards, and Local Preachers ; and concerning Meetings.

“ 1. No person shall be appointed a Leader or Steward, or be removed from his office, but in conjunction with the Leaders meeting : the nomination to be in the Superintendant, and the approbation or disapprobation in the Leaders-meeting.

“ 2. The former rule concerning Local Preachers is confirmed : viz. That no person shall receive a plan as a Local Preacher, without the approbation of a Local Preachers' meeting.

“ 3. In compliance with a request made by the Committee of persons from various parts, namely, That the Conference be requested to reconsider and revise those rules, which relate to the calling of meetings, and appointing Local Preachers, made last year ; we say, No Local Preacher shall be permitted to preach in any other

other Circuit than his own, without producing a recommendation from the Superintendant of the Circuit in which he lives; nor suffer any invitation to be admitted as a plea, but from men in office, who act in conjunction with the Superintendant of that Circuit which he visits. The design of this rule is to prevent any, under the character of Local Preachers, from burdening the people, either by collecting money, or by living upon them; and to prevent improper persons, who bear no part of the expence, from inviting Local Preachers thus to visit them. But it never was intended to reflect the least disrespect on any of our worthy brethren, the Local Preachers, who, considered as a body, we greatly respect. And it should not be lost sight of, that several of the most respectable Local Preachers in the kingdom, who were in the Committee which met the Committee of Preachers appointed by the Conference, declared their high approbation of the rule, and desired that it might be strengthened as much as possible, as none could justly complain of it.

“ 4. As the Committee above-mentioned requested also, that the Minute of the last Conference concerning the calling of Meetings to consider of the affairs of the Society or connexion, be explained: and as we are exceedingly desirous of preserving the peace and union of the whole body; we have agreed upon the following explanation, viz.

“ 1. As the Leaders' meeting is the proper meeting for the Society, and the Quarterly meeting for the Circuit, we think that other formal meetings, in general, would be contrary to the  
Methodist



Methodist œconomy, and very prejudicial in their consequences: But,

“ 2. In order to be as tender as possible, consistently with what we believe to be essential to the welfare of our Societies, we allow, that other formal meetings may be held, if they first receive the approbation of the Superintendant, and the Leaders or Quarterly meeting; provided also, that the Superintendant, if he please, be present at every such meeting.

“ V. In respect to all new rules, which shall be made by the Conference, it is determined, that if, at any time the Conference see it necessary to make any new rule for the Societies at large, and such rule should be objected to at the first Quarterly meeting in any given Circuit; and if the major part of that meeting, in conjunction with the Preachers, be of opinion, that the enforcing of such rule in that Circuit will be injurious to the prosperity of that Circuit; it shall not be enforced in opposition to the judgment of such Quarterly meeting before the *second* Conference. But if the rule be confirmed by the second Conference, it shall be binding to the whole connexion: Nevertheless, the Quarterly meetings rejecting a new rule, shall not by publications, public meetings, or otherwise, make that rule a cause of contention; but shall strive by every means to preserve the peace of the connexion.—Thus brethren, we have given up the greatest part of our executive government into your hands, as represented in your different public meetings.

“ The Conference has reserved to itself the management of its own book concerns: This is most reasonable; as the institution was established for the carrying on of the work of God under the direction

direction of Mr. Wesley and the Conference : was continued, by the DEED, or Codicil of Mr. Wesley's Will, for the use of the Conference : as the whole burden of the management of the business lies upon the Conference and the servants they employ, and on the Superintendants of Circuits : and also, as it is the only Fund which can supply any deficiencies of the yearly collection, as the accounts published in our Minutes for several years past clearly evidence, the yearly collection having not been nearly sufficient for the wants of the Preachers and their families, and for the carrying on of the work of God in general."

The admitting *Delegates* from the people into the District and Conference meetings, was the popular cry of the contentious party at this time. The Conference came to the following Resolution respecting it.

"As to *Delegates* ; the Conference having maturely considered the subject, are thoroughly persuaded, with many of our Societies, whose letters have been read in full Conference, that they cannot admit any but regular Travelling Preachers into their Body, either into the Conference or District meetings, and preserve the system of Methodism entire, particularly the Itinerant plan, which they are determined to support. But let it be well observed, that it is fully and explicitly understood, that if there be any accusation against a Preacher, or any difficult affair to settle, not only the Circuit, or Town Steward, but any Leader, or even Member of the Society, shall be admitted as evidence, to the District meeting ; provided the matter has been first heard at a Quarterly meeting."

Since

Since Mr. Wesley's death, the Conference has at times addressed circular letters to all the Societies. They have also received Addresses from the Irish Conference, which they have answered; and from the American Conference, to which also they have replied. These letters and Addresses are signed in behalf of the respective Conferences by the President and Secretary; are published annually in the Minutes, and contain a considerable degree of information and advice, which is very profitable to the People.

After the division which took place at this time, a few Trustees in some Circuits opened the Chapels to the Preachers united with *Mr. Kilham*, and refused those sent by the Conference. The Preachers at first seemed disposed to apply to Equity, in behalf of the Societies thus injured. But upon further consideration, they submitted to the evil in the cases which then occurred, esteeming it better to build other Chapels, than to encounter the trouble or expence of a Lawsuit. One thing however is clear, that those Trustees who have acted in this manner, are guilty of a very gross violation of the Trust reposed in them.

July 30, 1798, The Fifty-fifth Conference was held in Bristol. Mr. Joseph Benson was chosen President, and Mr. Samuel Bradburn Secretary.

Nothing new was done at this meeting. The following amendments were made to former Minutes.

1. It was recommended to the Districts to be very strict in examining the Preachers at their yearly meeting, respecting Morality, Religion, and their conscientious observance of the Rules.

It

It was also agreed, that the Minutes of each District should be read in the Conference.

2. Directions were given to guard more effectually against improper persons being received into the Connexion.

3. A collection was made at the Conference by the Preachers, and one appointed to be made through the whole connexion, for the Societies at Nottingham and Huddersfield, whose Chapels were wrested from them by the unfaithful Trustees, who joined the Schism under Mr. Kilham, to enable them to finish the new Houses they had begun to build.

The Methodists in Ireland suffered considerably during the past year, owing to the Rebellion which broke out in that kingdom. Part of the Address of the Irish Conference to the English Brethren thus describes their situation.—“ To attempt a description of our deplorable state, would be vain indeed. Suffice to say, that loss of trade, breach of confidence, fear of assassination, towns burnt, countries laid waste, houses for miles without an inhabitant, and the air tainted with the stench of thousands of putrid carcasses already cut off, form some outlines of the melancholy picture of our times. However, in the midst of this National confusion, we, and our people in general, blessed be God, have been wonderfully preserved; though some of us were imprisoned for weeks by the Rebels: exposed also to fire and sword in the heat of battle, and carried (surrounded by hundreds of pikes) into the enemy's camp, and plundered of almost every valuable; yet, we have not suffered the least injury in our persons! And moreover, God, even our own God, has brought us through all, to see  
S and



and embrace each other in this favoured City, (Dublin.) *O that the Church would therefore praise the Lord for his goodness, and for the wonders he hath done for us the meanest of his Servants.*

The English Conference manifested a most Christian and Brotherly spirit when this Address was read. They sympathized with their Brethren, and agreed that all their wants should be supplied before their own necessities were considered.

Mr. Asbury in his Address to this Conference, states the following particulars of the work, in the United States of America. He observes, "We have from one to two thousand Travelling and Local Preachers.—They are daily rising and coming forward (with proper recommendations from their respective Societies) to receive Ordination: and the regulations and ordinations of the six Yearly Conferences, form a weighty concern. From the Conference in Charleston, South Carolina, to that held in the Province of Maine, there is a space of one thousand three hundred miles." So extensively has Methodism spread in the Western World! There were Seven Conferences held in America in the year 1797, at the following several places, Charleston, Salem, (in Virginia,) Holstein, Baltimore, Philadelphia, Readfield, and Granville. A *General Conference* is held every fourth year. The next is appointed to be held in Baltimore, in May, 1800.

July 29, 1799, The Fifty-sixth Conference began at Manchester. Mr. Samuel Bradburn was chosen President, and Dr. Coke Secretary.

*The*

*The State of the Connexion at this Conference.*

Places.	Circuits.	Preachers.	Numbers.
In England - - -	107	238	84,429
In Ireland - - -	34	83	16,227
In Scotland - - -	6	16	1117
In Wales - - -	5	11	1195
In the Isle of Man	1	4	4100
In the Norman Isles	1	7	734
In the West India Islands - - -	13	23	14,170
In the British Do- minions in Ame- rica. - - -	13	8	1610
In the United S. of America.	109	400	60,169
<b>Total</b>	<b>360</b>	<b>940</b>	<b>180,751</b>

By a letter received from *Gibraltar*, (in Spain) the Conference were informed, That there were fifty persons in Society in that place. They walk according to the Methodist Rules, and earnestly desire that a Preacher may be sent to them. This the Conference have not yet been able to do; but as this Society are inserted in the Minutes, no doubt *that* help will be soon afforded them.

Mr. *Nebuchadnezer Lee*, who was formerly a Travelling Preacher in Ireland, also wrote to the Conference from Bengal in the East Indies, earnestly requesting that a Missionary might be sent thither. The Conference was obliged to postpone this also to a future day.

Mr. William Thompson, Mr. Thomas Olivers, and Mr. John Murlin, three of the old Travelling Preachers, died this year. The Confer-

ence mentioned them with much respect in the Minutes. *Mr. Murlin* began to labour like many of his Brethren, without purse or scrip. In a few years he became possessed of a considerable property by marriage; yet he continued to labour as before, using his Fortune only as a means of doing more good. An eminent instance of faithfulness!

The *American Minutes*, bore the most honourable testimony to the piety and usefulness of Mr John Dickins, a native of London, who had laboured in America many years; and who, as they observe, after standing the shock of two seasons, (1793 and 1797,) of that dreadful complaint the *Yellow Fever*, fell in the third awful visitation in 1798. A short extract of a letter written by him a little before his death to Mr. Asbury, is highly honourable to his memory.

“ My much esteemed Friend and Brother! I sit down to write as in the jaws of death. Whether Providence may permit me to see your face again in the flesh, I know not. But I hope through abundant Mercy, we shall meet in the presence of God. I am truly conscious, that I am an unprofitable, a very unprofitable servant; but I think my heart condemns me not, and therefore I have confidence towards God.—Perhaps I might have left the City, (New York,) as most of my Friends and Brethren have done, but when I thought of such a thing, my mind recurred to that Providence which has done so much for me, a poor worm; so that I was afraid of indulging any distrust: so I commit myself and family into the hands of God, for life or death.”—He closed his Christian course on September 27, 1798, in the fifty-second year of his age, commending

mending his soul to God, with uncommon joy, peace, and triumphant assurance of heavenly bliss. His Brethren close a long account of his industry, uprightness, and faithfulness, with observing, that in the cause of God, *He never feared nor flattered Man.*

This year the Irish Conference beholding the horrors which ignorance, and the most depraved superstition, had occasioned in that kingdom, and feeling a lively concern for the poor Natives, who are subject to the Church of Rome, set on foot a Mission for their instruction and edification. Three Preachers who can preach both in English and Irish willingly offered themselves for this service. The English Conference encouraged this benevolent design, and the best effects are hoped from it. Mr. Wesley longed over the souls of that benighted people; and their countryman, Mr. Thomas Walsh, (see page 56,) fell a sacrifice chiefly to his great exertions in their behalf. Love still hopeth all things; and perhaps the time will soon come when they also shall *worship God in spirit and in truth, and walk in love as he also has loved them.*

The greatest harmony reigned at this Conference; but the zeal of both Preachers and people on the different Circuits, occasioned an expence that all their usual exertions could not defray. For a few years, the Conference have been obliged to borrow money to answer the demands upon them, chiefly for the support of the Preachers families. This debt continued to accumulate; and the Yearly collection, which is designed to answer these extraordinary expences, with the profits of the books added to it, was found inadequate



quate to answer the present demands. They had no resource but to recommend an extraordinary collection to be made in the Circuits before the close of the year. Notwithstanding this pressure, the Preachers cheerfully departed to their several Circuits, knowing that *the earth is the Lord's*, and believing that word, *Trust in the Lord, and do good, and verily thou shall be fed.*

## THE CONCLUSION.

*A Statement of the comparative Increase of the Members of the Societies, and of the Itinerant Preachers and their Families, in Great Britain and Ireland, for the last Twenty-nine Years.*

Years.	Members.	Preachers.	Families.
1770	29,406	120	43
1780	44,830	171	52
1790	71,568	291	98
1799	107,752	400	200

**I**N the year 1770, a Preacher was supported by two hundred and forty-five Members, and a Family by six hundred and eighty-three. One-third of the Preachers were married.

In the year 1780, a Preacher was supported by two hundred and forty-six Members, and a Family by eight hundred and forty-three. Nearly one-third of the Preachers were married.

In the year 1790, a Preacher was supported by two hundred and forty-five Members, and a Family by seven hundred and thirty. One-third of the Preachers were married.

In the year 1799, a Preacher was supported by two hundred and fifty-five Members, and a Family by five hundred and thirty-six. One half of the Preachers were married.

From

From this statement it appears, that the Preachers have not encreased in a greater proportion than the people, as some who departed from the Work have invidiously asserted. But the Families certainly have increased since the year 1790, in a greater proportion than formerly; nor is it possible to prevent this without making unscriptural Rules. The Families are certainly at present a great burden, and the People do not feel it as they ought to do. Being zealous for their several Societies, and for the conversion of their ungodly neighbours, they build Chapels, and solicit the Conference to grant them additional Preachers, without making provision for the support of their families, which are thus thrown upon the Conference. If this be continued, it will be impossible to bear the expence. But we may hope it will not. Some Circuits have made considerable exertions to bear their own burden, and more will follow that good example, so that the Fund, viz. *The Yearly Subscription*, and *the profits of the Books*, may be used according to their original design, to supply the wants of the *poor Circuits*, and the *contingencies* of the Body at large.

The Book-room should certainly be supported by every lover of the Connexion. The Conference have made rules to restrain printing on the Circuits; and certainly the *Books of the Connexion* should never be printed but for the good of the *whole Connexion*. Should individuals invade this right, they would be guilty of a piracy of the worst kind. With respect to books that are really new, the Rule orders, that they shall be printed at the Conference Press, (being approved by the Committee,) or else not published  
and

and sold at our Chapels, as the Books of the Connexion are. As brotherly love increases all things will be done to edification.

Notwithstanding the care of the Societies to provide for the *household of Faith*, they have not forgotten the precept, *Do good unto all men*. Hence they have warmly supported every charitable institution in the kingdom, according to their ability. The *Sunday Schools*, for the education of poor children, and by which they are also restrained from wickedness on the Lord's day, is ably and zealously supported by them in every place. This excellent institution was begun by Mr. Raikes, of Gloster, in the year 1784. Mr. Wesley published an account of it in the *Arminian Magazine* for January 1785, and exhorted his Societies to imitate this gentleman's laudable example. Many thousands of those who were as *Wild Ass's Colts*, now repay the Christian labour bestowed upon them by being useful Members of Society, and not a few of them know and adorn the Gospel of God their Saviour.

Another Charity, *The Benevolent, or Strangers' Friend Society*, is almost wholly theirs. By this most benevolent institution, which is designed to relieve the destitute and afflicted of every denomination, many thousands have been rescued from the extreme of human misery. It was begun in Liverpool, in the year 1787, by the Methodist Society in that place, in order to give some relief to the many Strangers who resort thither. It is now general in all the large Societies, and the blessing of those that were ready to perish, come upon the conductors and supporters of it.

In this great Work, which I have now traced  
from



from its rise to the present time, the blessing and protection of the Lord has been abundantly manifested. At the beginning the Preachers were often treated in the most brutal manner by lawless Mobs, but a tolerant and upright Government have always afforded relief in these persecutions. Two instances, (and two only,) of legal persecutions, one in the Island of St. Vincent, in the West Indies, the other in the Island of Jersey were soon suppressed. The King refused his Assent to Laws purposely made to deprive the Societies of the blessing of Religious Liberty. The Throne of our King is thus established in righteousness, and it is more than ever the duty of the Methodists to pray, *That no weapon formed against him shall prosper.*

At the beginning of this great work, the Preachers and People had but few Rules to walk by, but they were powerfully influenced by a spirit of *Holiness*, and an earnest desire to promote it in all people. It is now our duty to pray, that our many excellent Rules may increase, and not lessen, this great vital principle.

THE ITINERANCY, or the Preachers changing their Circuits, has been a chief cause of the increase and prosperity of the Societies. Its advantages were so many, that perhaps too much was ascribed to it. But like all other things under the sun, it has its defects; and these are clearly seen wherever there is a want of the real life of God. In that case it is thought not to promote an increase of useful and edifying knowledge in the Preachers; a small stock, it is thought, will do for a Preacher, who has but a year or two to stay upon a Circuit, and perhaps may never be stationed there again. It is to be feared also, that it does not tend to promote that cordial love which ought to

to subsist between Preachers and People. As they expect to part in so short a time, they are too often comparatively easy about each other: and if they differ, as is sometimes the case, they comfort themselves with the thought that "The Conference will come," instead of endeavouring to heal the breach. The Removals also are attended with a considerable expence.

It would betray a want of Faith and humility to say, God could not carry on his Work without Itinerancy. Yet he has so greatly blessed it, and it is so agreeable to Holy Scripture, and the practice of the first Preachers of the Gospel, that it certainly is the bounden duty of both Preachers and People to maintain it. *The Lord who giveth the increase, can remove these apparent hindrances: and certainly he will remove them, in behalf of all those who walk humbly and closely with him.*

Singing, which makes so considerable a part in the public worship of the Methodists, is so conducted in some Chapels, that it forms a striking contrast to all that Mr. Wesley wrote or spoke on that subject. It seems to be a concert of Sacred Music, rather than the Worship of that Holy God who *will be sanctified in all who approach unto him.* Hence a levity is to be seen in the Worshippers, which was unknown among the old Methodists. This however is by no means a general case; and we may hope it never will be; but that all hindrances to the holy and happy religion of the Gospel will be for ever removed, and that God will abundantly bless both Preachers and People. Amen!

# APPENDIX.

## No. I.

### *The First Race of Methodist Preachers.*

(See Page 142.)

Those marked thus \* died in the Work. Those marked thus † departed from it. Those marked thus ‡ were expelled. Those without a mark are now labouring with their Brethren as Itinerants, or as Invalids, nearly worn out in the Lord's service.

Alexander Mather  
Barnabas Thomas †  
Christopher Hopper  
Daniel Bumstead †  
Duncan Wright \*  
George Roe †  
—— Story  
—— Hudson †  
Isaac Brown  
—— Waldron \*  
James Clough †  
—— Cotty †  
—— Oddie †  
—— Stephens †  
—— Kershaw †  
—— Brownfield †

James Dempster \*  
—— Rea †  
—— Longbottom †  
—— Glazebrook †  
—— Morgan \*  
John Morley †  
—— Brandon †  
—— Easton  
—— Jones †  
—— Oldham \*  
—— Murray †  
—— Slocombe \*  
—— Mason  
—— Pool  
—— Furze  
—— Nelson \*  
—— Oliver †

John

John Murlin *	Richard Lucas *
— Pawson	Robert Costerdine
— Atley †	— Roberts
— Catermole †	— Swindels *
— Shaw *	Samuel Woodcock †
— Ellis *	— Levick *
— Morgan *	Thomas Rourke †
— Dillon *	— Hanson
— Heslop †	— Carlill
— Johnson	— Lee *
— Whitehead †	— Hanby *
— Gibbs †	— Tobias *
— Helton †	— Taylor
Jacob Rowel *	— Johnson *
Jeremiah Robertshaw *	— Mitchell *
Joseph Cownley *	— Rankin †
— Guilford *	— Simpson †
— Thompson	— Olivers *
— Pilmoor †	— Briscoe *
Matthew Lowes *	— Westall *
Moseley Cheek †	— Newal †
Mark Davis †	William Thompson *
Martin Rodda †	— Pennington *
Nicholas Manners †	— Brammah *
Parson Greenwood	— Freemantle †
Paul Greenwood *	— Darney *
Peter Jaco *	— Minethorpe *
— Price †	— Whitwell †
Richard Henderson †	— Orpe †
— Walsh *	— Ellis †
— Boardman *	— Ashman
— Blackwall *	



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 No. II.
 

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*The Second Race of Methodist Preachers, with  
the Years in which they commenced Itinerants.*

(See Page 143.)

Those marked thus \* died in the Work. Those marked thus † were either expelled, or departed from the Work. Those without a mark are now living, and in Connexion with the Conference, either as Itinerants or Invalids.

1766

Alexander M'Nab †  
Benjamin Rhodes  
John Allen  
John Standerling \*  
James Deaves †  
Lancelot Harrison  
Richard Burke \*  
Simon Day  
Thomas Halliday †  
Thomas Dancer \*  
William Fugill †  
William Barker †

1767

Benjamin Colley †  
Francis Asbury  
John Magor †  
Joseph Harper  
John Smith \*  
James Cotty †  
John Davis †

John Peacock  
John Wittam  
John Haime \*  
Thomas Jane †  
Thomas Cherry \*  
Thomas Ryan †  
William Hunter \*  
William Harry †  
William Collins \*  
William Buckingham †

1768

Christopher Watkins  
George Shadford  
Hugh Sanderson †  
John Goodwin  
John Duncan †  
Joseph Garnett \*  
Jonathan Crowle †  
Francis Wolfe †  
Martin Rodda †  
Robert Bell †

Robert

Robert Howard  
 Samuel Bardsley  
 Stephen Proctor †  
 Richard Seed †  
 Thomas Wride

1769

George Snowden  
 Francis Wrigley  
 Joseph Fothergill †  
 James Hudson †  
 Jonathan Hern †  
 John Bredin  
 Richard Whatcoat  
 Robert Wilkinson \*  
 Samuel Wells \*  
 Thomas Barnes †  
 Thomas Dixon  
 Thomas Mott \*  
 William Pitt †  
 William Whitaker \*  
 Samuel Smith †

1770

Edward Slater †  
 George Wadsworth \*  
 George Mowat  
 John King, senior  
 John M'Avoy †  
 John Undrell †  
 James Perfect †  
 James Watson  
 Michael M'Daniel \*  
 Richard Rodda  
 Richard Wright †  
 Robert Swan  
 Robert Williams †  
 Stephen Nichols †

Thomas Janes †  
 William Horner  
 William Winby \*  
 William Linnell †  
 Thomas Tennant \*

1771

Charles Boon \*  
 Joseph Benson  
 James Hindmarsh †  
 John Pritchard  
 John Moulson †  
 John Watson, senior  
 John Bristol †  
 John Brettal \*  
 Michael Fenwick †  
 Nehemiah Price †  
 Robert Empringham \*  
 Thomas Tatton †  
 Thomas Eden †

1772

George Snowden  
 John Christian †  
 John Roberts \*  
 John Broadbent, \*  
 John Watson, junior  
 John M'Burney \*  
 John Price  
 Robert Dall  
 Robert Davis †  
 Thomas Rutherford  
 Thomas Ryan †  
 William Eells †  
 William Severn †

1773

George Shorter \*  
 Joseph Bradford

T 2

Joseph

Joseph Moore †  
 James Wood  
 John Leach  
 John Wiltshaw  
 Michael Moorhouse †  
 Ralph Mather †  
 Richard Hunt †  
 William Percival  
 William Duffton †

1774

Andrew Delap †  
 Arthur Kershaw †  
 Francis Smith †  
 George Guthrie †  
 Jasper Robinson \*  
 Jeremiah Brettal  
 James Rogers  
 James Barry \*  
 John Moon  
 John Whiteley †  
 Peter Mill  
 Robert Howard  
 Samuel Bradburn  
 Thomas Corbett \*  
 William Tunny †  
 William Moore †  
 William Thom †

1775

Duncan M'Allum  
 John Valton \*  
 John Crook  
 John Dean †  
 John Prickard \*  
 John Beanland \*  
 Joseph Sanderson  
 Peter Ferguson †

Thomas Vasey  
 1776

George Brown  
 Henry Robins †  
 Joseph Pescod  
 Joseph Fothergill †  
 James Skinner †  
 James Hall †  
 James Gaffney \*  
 John Harrison \*  
 John Hampson senior †  
 John Mayley †  
 Richard Cundy  
 Richard Watkinson \*  
 Robert Davis †  
 Robert Armstrong †  
 Thomas Hoskins \*  
 William Boothby  
 William Lumley †

1777

Edward Jackson  
 Hugh Moore †  
 Joseph Taylor  
 John Fenwick †  
 John Howe †  
 John Hampson, junr. †  
 William Church †  
 William Sanders  
 William Myles

1778

Thomas Coke, L.L.D.  
 Andrew Blair \*  
 Daniel Jackson  
 John Accut †  
 John Livermore \*  
 John Norris \*

James

James Burt †  
Jonathan Brown  
Nathaniel Ward †  
Robert Black †  
Robert Naylor \*  
Thomas Warrick  
Wm. M'Cornock, sen. \*

1779

Alexander Suter  
David Evans †  
George Button  
George Wadsworth \*  
Henry Moore  
George Wawne \*  
John Walker †  
John Booth  
James Christie †  
Thomas Barber  
Thomas Davies  
Samuel Mitchell †  
William Warrenner  
William Simpson  
Zechariah Yewdall  
Robert Lindsay †

1780

Andrew Inglis †  
George Gibbon  
Henry Foster \*  
John Crickett  
Joseph Cole  
Jonathan Coussins  
Joshua Keighley \*  
George Dice †  
Samuel Hodgson \*  
Thomas Shaw †  
Thomas Longley

Robert Bridge †  
Robert Hopkins  
Simon Day  
William Green †  
William West

1781

Charles Atmore  
Christopher Peacock \*  
James Wray \*  
James Jordan †  
John Fletcher \*  
John Ingham †  
John Millar \*  
Joseph Algar  
Thomas Ellis †  
Thomas Tattershall

1782

Adam Clarke  
George Holder  
Gustavus Armstrong  
John Barber  
John Glascock †  
John Ggylvie  
John Kerr  
James Bogie  
James Walker  
James Thom  
Samuel Botts  
Thomas Bartholomew  
Thomas Wride  
Robert Empringham \*  
Jonathan Parkin  
William Hoskins †

1783

Charles Bond †  
Edward Burbeck \*



John Cowmeadow \*  
 John King, junior  
 John Crossby  
 Joseph Jerom  
 Joseph Armstrong  
 James Rennick †  
 Lawrence Kane  
 Matthew Lum  
 Matthias Joyce  
 Robert Johnson  
 Samuel Edwards †  
 Thomas Hetherington †  
 William Wilson  
 William Adamson †

1784

Benjamin Pearce \*  
 Charles Kyte  
 Joseph Entwistle  
 Jonathan Crowther  
 James Creighton  
 James M'Donald  
 John M'Kersey  
 John Clarke †  
 Rt. Carr Brackenbury  
 Timothy Crowther  
 William Palmer  
 William Butterfield \*  
 William Hammett †  
 Walter Griffeth

1785

Alexander Kilham †  
 Andrew Coleman \*  
 Charles Bland  
 John Gualtier  
 John Smith, junior  
 John Ramshaw †

John Robotham †  
 John Dinnen  
 John De Queteville  
 James Ridel  
 Peter Walker †  
 Robert Gamble \*  
 Richard Cundy  
 William Hunter jun.  
 William Blackburne  
 William Thorseby  
 William Holmes  
 William Fish

1786

Abraham Moseley  
 Duncan Kay  
 David Gordon  
 Francis Frazier \*  
 George Baldwin  
 George Highfield  
 James Gore \*  
 James Byrom  
 James Evans  
 James Williams  
 John Reynolds  
 John Townsend  
 John Barrett  
 John Tregortha †  
 John Atkins  
 John Beaumont  
 John Harper  
 John Grace  
 John Baxter  
 John Gillis †  
 John M'Geary †  
 Jonathan Edmondson  
 Joseph

Joseph Sutcliffe  
 Stephen Kelshall †  
 Theophilous Lessey  
 Thomas Roberts  
 Thomas Smith †  
 Thomas Gill  
 Thomas Owens  
 Thomas Seward \*  
 Samuel Bates  
 Samuel Moorhead  
 Richard Thorsby  
 William Bramwell  
 William Heath  
 William Stephens  
 Thomas Broadbent †

1787

David Barrowlough  
 Francis Armstrong  
 Francis Truscott  
 Hugh Pugh \*  
 John Stamp  
 John Holmes  
 John Woodrow  
 John Sandoe  
 John Saunders †  
 John Burnett \*  
 John Black \*  
 John Darragh  
 John Melcomson  
 John West †  
 John Roberts \*  
 Joseph Cross\*  
 Joseph Entwistle  
 Pierd Dickenson  
 Richard Reece  
 Robert Harrison

Robert Dall  
 Sammuell Gates  
 Michael Marshall \*  
 Thomas Hewit  
 Thomas Kerr  
 Thomas Wood  
 William Collins, jun. †  
 Wm. M'Cornock, junr.

1788

Alexander Moore  
 Andrew Hamilton  
 Benjamin Leggatt  
 Charles Tunycliffe  
 Daniel Graham  
 George Lowe  
 Henry Taylor †  
 John Hicklin  
 John Furnace  
 John Stephens \*  
 John Stephenson  
 John Ryle  
 John Wiltshaw  
 Jasper Winscombe †  
 James Lyons †  
 James M'Mullen  
 Matthew Stewart  
 Michael Murphy  
 Nebuchadnezzar Lee †  
 Richard Seed †  
 Robert Smith  
 Robert Miller  
 Richard Drew †  
 Mark Willes \*  
 Thomas Dunn  
 Thomas Rogerson  
 Thomas Wymont †  
 Thomas

Thomas Kelk	Edward Gibbon
Thomas Dobson †	George Sargant
Thomas Elliot *	George Sykes
1789	John Braithwaite
Andrew Hamilton, jun.	John Pipe
John Kershaw	John Dean
John Nelson	John Boyle
John Denton	John Doncaster
John Grant	John Saunderson
John Cross	John Simpson
John Beaumont	John Hurley
Jonathan Thompson *	John Grant
James M <sup>c</sup> Quigg	Joseph Burgess
James Irwin	James Lawton †
Miles Martindale	James Anderson †
Robert Lomas	James Lyons, junior †
Robert Crowther	Isaac Lilly †
Robert Smith	Richard Elliott
Samuel Wood †	Owen Davis
Thomas Hutton	Robert Harrison
Thomas Ridgeway	Samuel Taylor
Thomas Patterson	Samuel Steel
Thomas Werrill *	Thomas Simeonite
Thomas Cooper	Thomas Fretheray
William Jenkins	Thomas Harrison
William Smith	Thomas Ryan
William Cox	Thomas Greaves
William Brandon †	Thomas Brown
William Dicuade †	William Shelmardine
1790	William Denton *
Archibald Murdock	William Smith, junior
Blakeley Dowling	William Aver
Charles Graham	William Hainsworth.

N. B. I have omitted those who were only admitted on Trial, but not received into the Connexion.

No. III.

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 No. III.
 

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*Mr. Wesley's Last Will and Testament.*

In the name of God, Amen !

I JOHN WESLEY, Clerk, some time Fellow of *Lincoln-College, Oxford*, revoking all others, appoint this to be my last Will and Testament.

I give all my Books now on sale, and the Copies of them (only subject to a rent charge of 85l. a year to the widow and children of my Brother)\* to my faithful friends, *John Horton*, Merchant, *George Wolff*, Merchant, and *William Marriott*, Stock-Broker, all of *London*, in trust for the general Fund of the Methodist Conference in carrying on the work of God, by Itinerant Preachers : on condition that they permit the following Committee, *Thomas Coke*, *James Creighton*, *Peard Dickenson* *Thomas Rankin*, *George Whitfield*, and the *London Assistant* for the time being, still to superintend the Printing Press, and to employ *Hannah Paramore* and *George Paramore* as heretofore, unless four of the Committee judge a change to be needful.

I give the Books, Furniture, and whatever else belongs to me in the three houses at *Kingswood*, in trust to *Thomas Coke*, *Alexander Mather*, and *Henry Moore*, to be still employed in teaching and maintaining the children of poor Travelling Preachers.

\* It was found upon enquiry that the principal sum due was 1600l. (see page 145.)

I give



I give to *Thomas Coke*, Doctor *John Whitehead*, and *Henry Moore*, all the Books which are in my study and bedchamber at *London*, and in my studies elsewhere, in trust for the use of the Preachers who shall labour there from time to time.

I give the coins, and whatever else is found in the drawer of my Bureau at *London*, to my dear grand-daughters *Mary* and *Jane Smith*.

I give all my Manuscripts to *Thomas Coke*, Doctor *Whitehead*, and *Henry Moore*, to be burnt or published as they see good.

I give whatever Money remains in my Bureau and Pockets at my decease, to be equally divided between *Thomas Briscoe*, *William Collins*, *John Easton*, and *Isaac Brown*.

I desire my Gowns, Cassocks, Sashes, and Bands, may remain at the Chapel for the use of the Clergymen attending there.

I desire the *London Assistant* for the time being to divide the rest of my wearing apparel between those four of the Travelling Preachers that want it most; only my pellise I give to the Rev. Mr. *Creighton*: my watch to my friend *Joseph Bradford*, my gold seal to *Eliz. Ritchie*.

I give my chaise and horses to *James Ward* and *Charles Wheeler*, in trust, to be sold, and the money to be divided, one half to *Hannah Abbott*, and the other to the poor members of the Select Society.

Out of the first money which arises from the sale of Books, I bequeath to my dear sister *Marta Hall*, (if alive) 40l. to Mr. *Creighton* aforesaid, 40l. and to the Rev. Mr. *Heath* 60l.

And whereas I am empowered by a late Deed to name the persons who are to Preach in the  
New

New Chapel at *London* (the Clergymen for a continuance) and by another Deed to name a Committee for appointing Preachers in the New Chapel at *Bath*, I do hereby appoint *John Richardson*, *Thomas Coke*, *James Creighton*, *Peard Dickenson*, Clerks, *Alexander Mather*, *William Thompson*, *Henry Moore*, *Andrew Blair*, *John Vulton*, *Joseph Bradford*, *James Rogers*, and *William Myles*, to preach in the New Chapel at *London*, and to be the Committee for appointing Preachers in the New Chapel at *Bath*.

I likewise appoint *Henry Brooke*, Painter, *Arthur Keen*, Gent. and *William Whitestone*, Stationer, all of *Dublin*, to receive the annuity of 5*l.* (*English*) left to *Kingswood School* by the late *Roger Shiel*, Esq.

I give 6*l.* to be divided among the six poor men, named by the Assistant, who shall carry my body to the grave ; for I particularly desire there may be no herse, no coach, no escutcheon, no pomp, except the tears of them that loved me, and are following me to *Abraham's* bosom. I solemnly adjure my Executors in the name of God, punctually to observe this.

Lastly, I give to each of those Travelling Preachers who shall remain in the Connexion six months after my decease, as a little token of my love, the eight volumes of sermons.

I appoint *John Horton*, *George Wolff*, and *William Marriot*, aforesaid, to be Executors of this my last Will and Testament, for which trouble they will receive no recompence till the Resurrection of the Just.

Witness my hand and seal, the 20th day of February 1789

JOHN WESLEY, (Seal)  
Signed

Signed, sealed, and delivered by the  
said Testator as for his last Will and  
Testament, in the presence of us

WILLIAM CLULOW,  
ELIZABETH CLULOW.

Should there be any part of my personal  
Estate undisposed of by this my Will: I give the  
same unto my two Nieces *E. Ellison*, and *S. Col-  
let*, equally.

JOHN WESLEY.

WILLIAM CLULOW,  
ELIZABETH CLULOW.

*Feb. 25, 1789.*

I give my Types, Printing-Presses, and every  
thing pertaining thereto to Mr. *Thomas Rankin*,  
and Mr. *George Whitfield*, in trust for the use of  
the Conference.

JOHN WESLEY.

THE END.

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